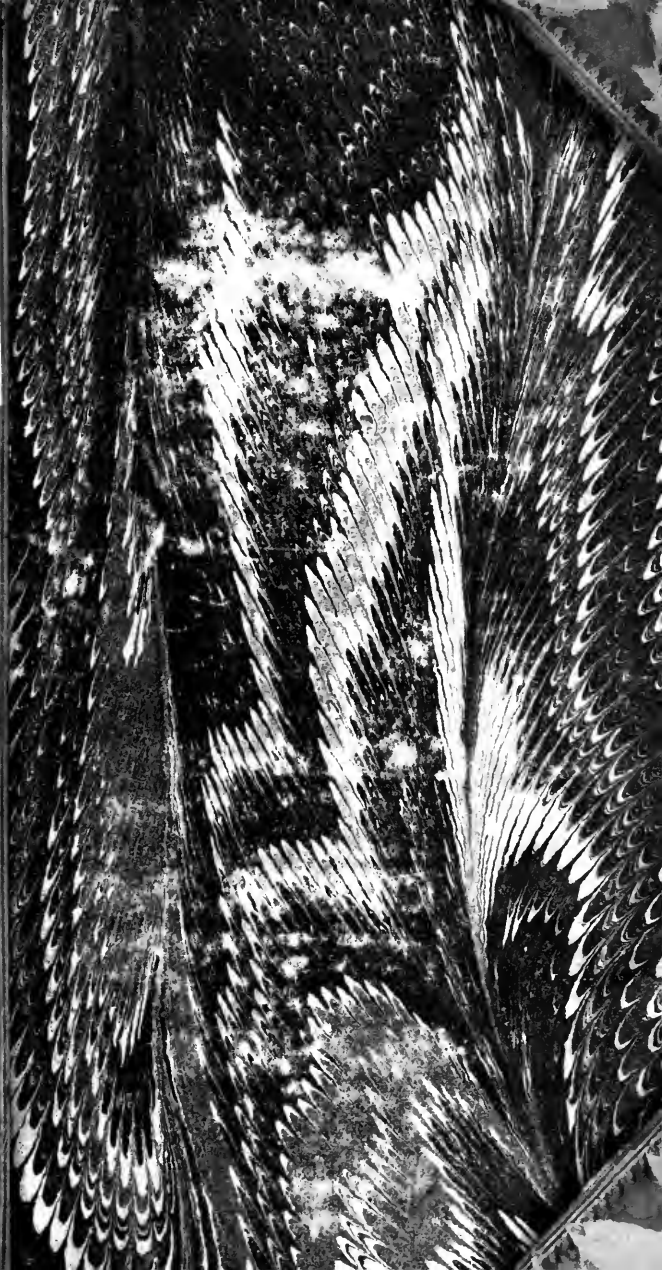


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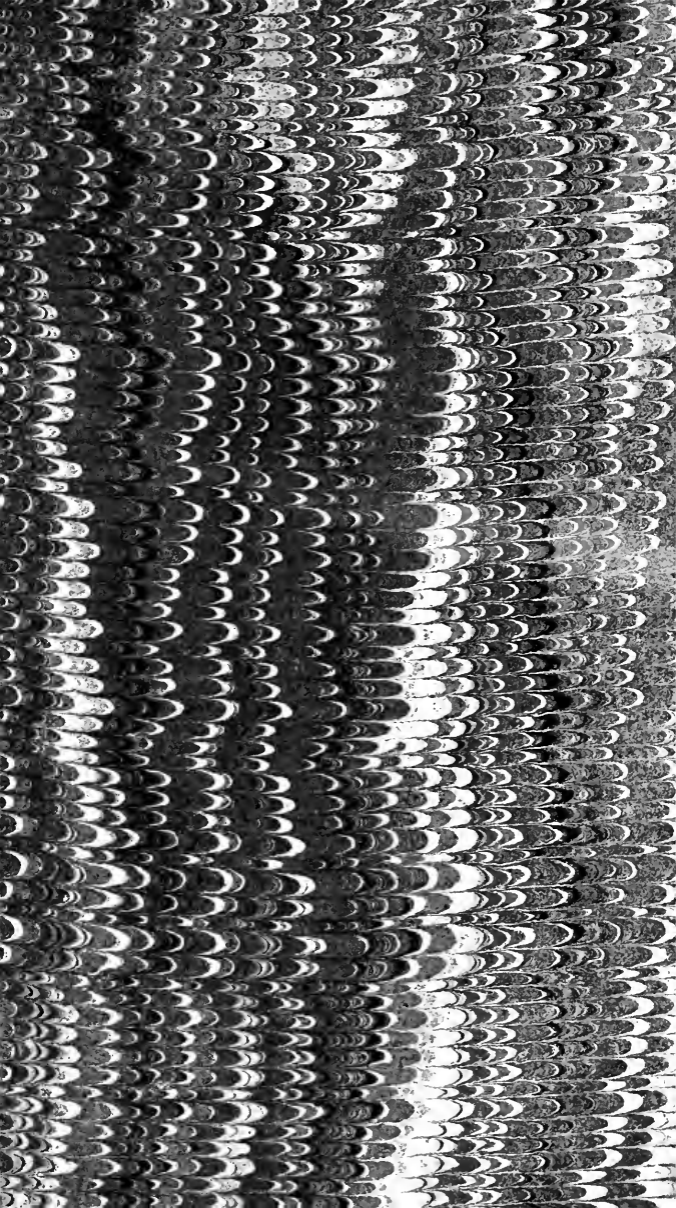


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IDYLS OF LABOUR.

BY

JOHN GREGORY.

“ I love thee, Poesy! Thou art a rock,
I, a weak wave, would break on thee and die.

* * * * *
’Tis not for me, ye heavens, ’tis not for me
To fling a Poem, like a comet, out,
Far-splendouring the sleepy realms of night.”

A. SMITH.



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Frome, and London.*

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TO

My ever faithful Friends,

DR. JOHN THOMPSON,

AND THE

REV. ADAM CLARKE ROWLEY,

I dedicate

This Volume of Poems,

WITH GRATEFUL ADMIRATION

AND ESTEEM.

871416

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IDYLS OF LABOUR.



Abraham Lincoln.



S OUL of mine ! for murdered Lincoln,
Whilst I weep for noble Lincoln,
Praise the mighty martyr Lincoln—
Up and sing.

Break from horror's bonds, and warble
With the birds that chant above him,
In the cypress-tree above him,
O'er the granite, mould, or marble—
To all wounded hearts that love him
Do thou sing.

To Columbia's sons and daughters—
Poor Columbia's sons and daughters—
Weeping by the crimsoned waters
Of that blighted land of Goshen,
Whilst we share her deep emotion—
Sad soul, sing.

When the king of terrors bound him
In his dark land, angels found him,
And the hand that slew him crowned him
Who was a crownless king.

Nay, he was not crownless—never.
 Lincoln wore, but not for ever,
 Round his brow a crown of briers,
 Sharpened by the friends of slavery,
 Twisted by the tongues of liars,
 And the gall-dipped pens of liars !
 Still he wore it, wore it bravely ;
 Wore it as a hero routing
 Freedom's foes, and wore it shouting
 " Upward ! onward ! " never doubting,
 Whilst the negro's cross he bore.

Sad Columbia ! we have driven,
 Driven you with freemen's sneers,
 To wash your flag with blood and tears,
 This we hope may be forgiven.
 We have said, old England's banner—
 Still we say, a Briton's banner—
 Does not bear that brand of shame.
 We have jeered you in this manner
 Till the day of cleansing came ;
 We have thrown the stone of blame !

When Oppression grew defiant
 Nature gave the world a giant.
 Freedom, in that moral giant,
 Found a lover and a good man—
 Abraham ! the mighty woodman :
 Abraham ! the poor rail-splitter,
 Rose a star, and rose to glitter,
 Though his foes were strong and bitter !

Tell me, oh ! ye worldly wise men—
 Wondrous wise men of the East—
 When you saw great Lincoln rise, then,
 Why you did not bow, at least ?

He, to bless the Old Dominion,
Rose by virtue, truth, and right :
By the force of men's opinion
He arose, but not to fight.

Why were men to frenzy heated
When they saw Minerva's star ?
Why should Liberty be cheated,
Or the South, by mind defeated,
Wake the hateful howl of war ?

Though he rose and fought the dragon,
Though he fought Columbia's curse,
Though he slew the hideous dragon,
War was what he counted worse.
Not with battle's blasting thunder,
Not with the red hand of slaughter,
But with Justice—God's blind daughter—
Would he cut that curse asunder.
Four long years he wrestled with it ;
Up and down he struggled with it ;
Fought, because he first was smitten.
Let me sing that strain once more—
Fought, because he first was smitten
By rebellious Sumter's roar.

Hear, my soul, thy fond hope humming,
Singing to a host of hearts—
The sweet angel, Love, is coming,
And her sister, Peace, is coming,
Like a balmy summer, coming ;
Lo ! the demon War departs.
Still I hear the deep-toned rattle
Of the hollow, heartless drum ;
But I thank the God of battle
My dark brothers are not cattle—
Thank Him that the end is come.

The hatchet of war is deep in the root
Of the deadly upas tree ;
The scorpion is under a conqueror's foot,
'Tis the hour of victory.
The joy bells warble, the people shout ;
All is merry and gay ;
The city is flinging its banners out,
And harmless cannon say,
There 's not a blot that banner about,
With blood and tears we have wiped it out ;
'Tis well for the North to-day.

The goblet of pleasure is raised to their lips,
And the President's lips ; but, hark !
There's a horrible shriek in the air as he sips—
Foul murder has hit its mark.
Whilst he was ringing oppression's knell,
When lovers of peace were glad,
Two fiends broke loose from the nether dell,
Two rebels were driven mad.
The one he flew to a sick man's bed—
He smote Columbia's hands ;
The other struck at the nation's head,
Then Lincoln the Just was smitten dead ;
But the savage broke with the fatal lead
A merciful spirit's bands.

As the avalanche falls from the mountain top,
Or a meteor athwart the sky,
So Liberty's star was doomed to drop,
But its glory shall never die.





Reflections on the American War.

SLAVERY! thou Columbia's curse,
Born of a passion for power of purse,
Come up, come up to my judgment bar,
Thou hateful cause of this hateful war!
Why thou wert born too well we know;
Why thou shouldst live, say, canst thou show?
Thou hast defenders, high and low;
Friends in the South, that toil and strive
With lives and treasures to keep thee alive;
Friends in the North, and many they be,
That hate thy foes as I hate thee.
One of thy bitterest foes am I,
Living in hope to see thee die;
And to liberty's God, whilst I have breath,
Will I pray, O slavery, for thy death.
Of money, 'tis said it is all evil's root:
The slave being money, this war is the fruit
Of the slave owner's lust for the yellow faced ore;
And the natural child of his sinful amour
Is a thing to be hated, a monster uncouth,
A dragon whose den is the heart of the South.
'Say the North from the South shall sever,
To stay the flowing of war's red river,
And let the curse endure for ever.'
Such is the cry that I have heard raised,

By those who slavery's champions praised,
 And this they say for oppression's sake,
 'We see Divinity in this snake.'
 I wonder how much such men would take,
 Of shame or fame, applause or dollars,
 For a view of hell in water colours ;
 Or what term of acquaintance would make a gorilla
 Appear, in their judgment, a good-looking fellow !
 We first behold vice with a horror and dread ;
 We let it approach us, and feel less afraid ;
 We then entertain it, and virtue drops dead.
 Then the vice we once hated is loved—ah ! and sought ;
 And we say it is not half as bad as we thought.
 May slavery ever be frightful in shape !
 For the slave, what is he any more than the grape
 That is mangled and pressed for the wine it contains—
 A black image of God, heavy laden with chains !
 All things that are, are prone to change ;
 The sun, moon, stars, tides, winds, that range—
 The tunes they sing, the trees that nod
 And change their raiment on the sod ;
 All things—are apt to change, save God ;
 Down from the clouds, that float in crowds,
 To mortals changing in their shrouds.
 And to all changeful things we join
 Opinions, which are mental coin
 We manufacture in that mint,
 The human mind, for speech or print.
 All men are apt their own to love,
 And this, all other things above,
 Has been the cause of death and pain
 To millions, and it will again.

* * * * *

Sons and daughters of Ham, your cries
 To the just God have pierced the skies.

The black-souled white, with his blood-wet whip,
That bore you away in his savage grip
To that airless hell—the hold of his ship ;
The soulless fence, that bargained and bought
A freight of plunder the sea-thief brought ;
And he of the auction, the monster that smiled
As he bid for the mother, but not her sick child,
And purchased a father away from his mate,
To do him to death on a distant estate.
The harsh overseer, that liberty gave
To the bloodhounds he sent on the trail of the slave,
When he broke from his chains like a bird from its cage.
All these, and thy foes in the North, full of rage
At the loss of their power to injure a brother,
Are armed to the teeth for the death of each other.
Though the answer was long delayed,
The wrath is come for which you prayed :
Flashes of flame, and showers of lead
Forth from the cloud of your black despair,
Burst and strike, and will not spare
Flesh from death, or hearts from pain.
Nor hast thou cried to God in vain,
If war He sent to break thy chain.
Britannia, fond lover of freedom professed,
Wilt thou as a wanton enfold to thy breast
That rival of freedom true Britons detest,
Or take to thy council, great queen of the brave,
A Mason, that reared in the way of the slave
Escaping from bondage, a wall of despair !
Dear England, my country, beware, O beware !
To sin thou art tempted : but if thou dost yield,
Great God-chosen bearer of liberty's shield,
A bitter repentance shall follow in time ;
Then pause, and reflect, ere you patronize crime.
Crime is a fiend I would slay with the pen

Instead of the sword, or the gallows. What then?
Though I wish to kill crime, I would not murder men.
God did not slay Cain when his brother he slew,
But set a mark on him that every man knew.
That mark I would fix on the slaveholder's brow—
Columbia, that stain is on thine even now.
Thou art making an effort that brand to remove.
I would it were done with sweet spirits of love;
But my soul is alarmed by the voice of my fears,
For I know nothing less than hot blood and salt tears,
Cold death and black ruin, will make that mark cease,
And the lengthy exile of the angel named Peace.
Lovers of peace, can you love them that broke it?
Haters of war, will you aid them that woke it?

* * * * *





A Prayer for Poland.*

GOD of Freedom, ever heeding
Men and nations with Thee pleading,
For the sons of Poland bleeding,

Hear my prayer !

Britons, countrymen, and brothers,
Noble sons of noble mothers,
Bearing sympathy for others,
Hear my prayer !

Hear me, for my heart is saddened
By a thousand fears that wake ;
While I pray for heroes maddened,
Whilst I sing for Poland's sake.

Hear me for her daughters weeping
In despair.

Hear me for the brave that toil
In red fields where death is reaping ;
Fighting for their sacred soil
In a royal robber's keeping—
Poland fair

Is from death to life awaking.

Help her now, her chains off shaking,
Aid the effort she is making,
Cheer her glorious undertaking.
Let her share

* Written during her last struggle for freedom.

What you gave Italy—risen
From beneath a tyrant's heel,
And the horrors of her prison.
Sympathy, gold, lead, or steel,
Freely spare ;

Whilst they wrestle, ye that nestle
Under Liberty's broad wing,
To her gallant storm-torn vessel
A strong rope of hope out fling.
Apathy to woe is hateful ;
Poland will be ever grateful.
To her long war-beaten barque
Fling it, then, from Freedom's ark,
And grant my prayer.





The End of a Life.

PART I.

T WAS winter in the land. The east wind blew,
O'er the grey down, and through the city's heart,
Cold as the kiss of Death. The factory gate
Was bolted by depression. Starving men
Dotted the streets like statues of Despair;
And savage Famine, from their sunken eyes,
Shot the sharp shafts of Envy. Love went out
From many homes when Poverty came in;
A man became a wolf, that fought his wife
For a bare crust of bread their hungry child
Snatched from the hand of Pity.

In those days,
A poor toil hunter, weary of the chase,
Returned, half-frozen, to his joyless haunt,
And tried to scare the frost fiend with the blaze
Of his hard shaving bed. Ah! what is that
He lifts so kindly to his long, lean arms,
To share his passive comfort? 'Tis the corse
Of her for whom he fought full forty years
With all the ills of life. A jury said:
She perished by starvation. "Righteous God!
And has it come to this," the old man cried;
Then sudden sinking with his ghastly load,
Before the crimson flames, he laid her down,

And kissed her shrunken cheek till Reason flew
Its lofty throne, like a poor frightened bird,
And left his soul in darkness. Then the glare
Of the last shaving flickered and expired,
And double blackness hid him. In that night
Ages of torment came and crawled away—
Ages in which a bitter hate of life
Outgrew all other passions, and he wept
A flood of tears because he could not die
And be no more for ever.

PART II.

'Twas winter in the heart of a poor wretch,
That from the city crept away to hide
His body from the gaze of God and man
In a dense forest thicket. In his path
There was a woodman's cot, by which he paused,
Because a little damsel sang within,
"There is a happy land." The old man stood,
Heaven-arrested, as a serpent charmed
By the sweet spell of music, and exclaimed,
"That's a dear lie Hope told me long ago,
And yet I love to hear it." Then he stole
Softly, on tiptoe, round the garden hedge,
And through the cottage window, unobserved,
Beheld the happy singer, sitting by
A baby brother's cradle. On her lap
The Holy Book lay open, and she read,
After her psalm was sung, of our dear Lord,
Who said, "O, all that labour, come to me,
And I will give you rest." A painful sob,
Bursting its bondage, smote her tender ear,
And looking up she saw an old man's face
Through the geranium branches. 'Twas a face

Never to be forgotten. All the woe
Of a lost soul seemed written on the front
Of that life-haunted skull. Out from her lips
Flew, like a swallow's scream, her startled cry;
But when her better courage conquered fear,
Again she dared a glance, and, lo! 'twas gone—
She knew not how or whither.

PART III.

'Twas winter in the wood. A starving man
Sat in the hollow of an old oak tree,
And wept himself to sleep; in which he trod
The banquet hall of Plenty. A rich feast
Of all good things in full abundance lay
On sumptuous tables, decked with fragrant flowers
And full ripe autumn fruits from every clime
Beneath the blessing sun. The golden walls
Were all ablaze with splendour. Precious stones
Of every dainty tint, like mimic stars,
Spangled a jasper floor. The lofty roof
Was one soul-witching mass of lovely things—
Gay roses, verdant leaves, and ears of corn,
Tangled with rare festoons of bursting grapes.
It must have been a heaven to the birds
That sang among such glory. In his dream,
A busy mem'ry darting through his brain,
Recalled the woodman's daughter and her hymn—
"There is a happy land." Awhile he gazed,
With admiration, gratitude, and love,
On the enchanting scene. The savage winds
Tore through the wood ten thousand lions strong,
And o'er the cliff to fight the foaming flood
Sprang out with horrid yells. The heartless oak
Waved its bare arms above a heartless man,

And still he heard them not. O sleep, how sweet
It is to dream of Heaven! Looking through
The grand pavilion portals, he beheld,
Hasting to meet him through fair fields of flowers,
The spirit of his wife. Impelled by love,
Sudden he rose on the elastic air,
And with a blissful motion sailed away
To clasp her—his for ever. But a cloud
Came up between them, and just when they met,
A fatal arrow, by a black-plumed knight
Urged lightning swift, was buried in his breast,
And, with a shriek, from his great bliss he fell
Down to his sorrow in the old oak-tree,
And, waking, cried, "God save me," till he found—
Ah! what found he, who was a poor white slave,
Worn out with toil and worthless to the world?—
'Mid the bright tears that sparkled at his feet,
He found the pearl of a great price, and cried,
"Jesus, I thank Thee!" then he smiled and died.





Lily Hore.

IN the fine midsummer weather
Little Lily Hore with me
Hunted health and love together
Down in Devon by the sea,
Hand in hand
O'er the sand
Shining like an amber sheet,
Glancing out beneath our feet,
Far and wide,
In its pride,
Level as the shore of heaven,
Where the crystal wavelets beat,
Where death-parted lovers meet,
And 'tis always summer sweet,
Sweeter than it is in Devon—
Evermore,
Lily Hore.

Lily is a brave man's daughter ;
In an ocean grave he sleeps :
Do the spirits of the water
Know when little Lily weeps ?
All in vain,
By the main,
They have laid within her reach
Pretty playthings on the beach :
Polished shells
From their cells,

Gems from the great ocean's coffer,
 Treasures from the deep sea cave
 Down below the white-frilled wave,
 Flowers from her father's grave
 Doth the sea repenting offer
 Little, poor
 Lily Hore.

Sitting on a wall of pebbles
 Gazing o'er the deep green bay,
 Listening to a skylark's trebles,
 And the ocean's roundelay ;
 Lily said,
 As she laid,
 Laid her aching head to rest
 On the pillow of my breast,
 " Tell my heart,
 Ere we part,
 Is it very far from heaven ?
 Since our father sailed away
 Mother's hair is growing gray,
 And we miss him every day—
 Will he ever come to Devon
 And his poor
 Lily Hore ?"

" Maiden waiting for thy father,
 Heaven is not far from thee,
 From this sorrow thou canst gather
 Strength to cross the troubled sea
 Of this life
 Full of strife.
 I have lived to learn this truth,
 Heaven is not far from youth.
 Never fear,
 Lilly dear.

O how calm thy loving face is ;
Is the spirit of thy sire
In a flood of summer fire
Near thee with love's golden lyre ?
Feelest thou his kind embraces,
Little, poor
Lily Hore ?”

Lily's years are only seven,
But her love is deep and grand.
To my Lily peace is given,
More than we can understand ;
And the wind
Bloweth kind
O'er our darling shorn by death :
As a happy angel's breath,
Breathing bliss,
And a kiss,
To a blossom he left blooming
Full of beauty, life, and glee,
Down in Devon near the sea,
Where soul-sorrow said to me—
'Tis a pity he went roaming
From his poor
Lily Hore.





“The Oregon.”*

FOR Swansea from Quebec—ah, me !
’Tis such a weary while ago,
Since my first hope flew o’er the sea
 To meet the home-bound *Oregon*.
Back to my heart, like Noah’s dove,
That hope returned, and told my love
That when the Christmas feast was spread,
And death was near the Old Year’s bed,
The Pilot of great worlds that sail
 In the thin nothingness of space,
Would waft the ship within my hail,
 And give her crew to love’s embrace.

’Tis sweeter far than pen can tell
To dwell with hope, when hope is well.
Forth to her garden, green and gay,
She led my happy love away,
And crowned her with a garland rare
Of expectations, fresh and fair.
O heaven ! ’twas a joy too fleet !
’Twas hope that made my waiting sweet,
With tender stories, vainly told ;
’Twas hope that paved my path with gold ;
’Twas hope that woke my fancy bright,
And filled my heart with Eden’s light ;

* The *Oregon* sailed from Quebec on the 27th of November, 1868, and has not since been heard of. The writer’s brother-in-law was her chief officer, and father of Lily Hore.

'Twas hope that raised me to the sky,
 That fate might dash me down to die.
 And yet it was a glorious thing
 To hear the soft-voiced syren sing
 Of future bliss ; but whilst I heard,
 Time darted by me like a bird :
 And then there came a wanton doubt,
 To blight my garland with his breath ;
 So when the Old Year's life went out,
 Love gave her wreath to death !

Life was not then so sad as now :
 In the drear desert of my mind,
 Unharm'd by sorrow's crushing plough,
 One hope remained behind.
 With that lone hope the watch was kept ;
 With that poor hope my spirit swept
 O'er the wide deep, when fancy saw,
 On a frail wave-wet raft of straw,
 'Mid the mad waves, a shipwrecked crew—
 Now there is not a straw to view !
 Nothing to grasp but memory's chain :
 The last, last hope is gone with pain,—
 Gone, like a tear-drop wept on sand.
 My heart is empty as my hand
 Of all the joy for which I pant.
 Oh, God ! this is a horrid want !
 No hope ! that one I held so dear,
 Lies strangled by the grip of fear.
 Last midnight, by love's beacon fire,
 I saw her faint, and then expire.
 Now all this night, that may not break,
 Rings with the echo of her shriek—
 That shriek—a word ! that word is lost—
 Lost ! the Eternal Judge knows where !

A shadow hath my pathway crossed :
That shadow is—despair.

I never saw—I shall not see
The barque that bore my brother brave
So far away from mine and me,
To hide him in the grave.
She might have been the smartest craft
A sea wind ever woke to waft
Across the ocean's breast ; but then
She was the hearse of noble men.
Great Father of the universe,
Grant me a better hope to nurse !
Yet what is man, that Thou shouldst be
So mindful of poor me ?
Death passeth by my door, and yet
Within her cell my soul doth fret.
O spare one sunbeam on this frost ;
To tell us that they are not lost !
Lost ! that fell sound my soul doth hate :
It is the voice of wretched care,
Which tells me I am desolate.
Lost ! 'tis the wail of strong despair.
The ship and all her crew are gone :
I am not left to mourn alone ;
I only knew one soul on board,
Of all her long-lamented hoard.
I know not where his tomb may be,
In all the vast, wild, greedy sea.
I will not ask that savage mob
Of winds, that mock the sea-boy's sob.
Wrapt in this frame of flesh and blood,
My soul sits sullen as my foe—
The heartless, cold, relentless flood,
That will not let him go.



Sea-side Musings.

SAY, mortal, hast thou heard
The vast and mighty sea
Wailing for forms that are interred
Beneath its breast, which seemeth stirred
By souls in misery ;

 Heaving up and down,
 Swaying to and fro,
Singing a song for a mournful throng
In the graveyard down below ?

Many are those that stay
Far from their cheerless homes ;
Never a mourner came that way
To pay the debt of love, or pray
Beside their nameless tombs.

 Heaving up and down,
 Swaying to and fro :
Listen ! the swell is singing a knell
For sleepers down below.

The brave sea-boy is there,
And he that grasped the helm,
When the sky was black as a soul's despair,
And death was hovering in the air
Above that briny realm.

 Heaving up and down,
 Swaying to and fro :
Ever the surge is chanting a dirge
For loved ones down below.

There beauty's softest lock
Is braided thick and fast
With flowers, weeds, and gems that stock
Cavern, cave, or pillar of rock,
In the ocean garden vast.
 Heaving up and down,
 Swaying to and fro,
Singing the bass at a solemn mass
For the bleaching dead below.

There the fisherman lies,
Whose love, on the lone cliff,
Stood gazing through her tearful eyes,
When she heard the hurricane rise
That swamped her lover's skiff.
 Heaving up and down,
 Swaying to and fro:
She looks in vain, for the cruel main
Is keeping him down below.

Oh sea, of trouble full,
Up from their dreamless beds
Why liftest thou each eyeless skull,
As if they heard the wild sea-gull
Screaming above their heads?
 Heaving up and down,
 Rocking to and fro,
On pillows hard, in that graveyard,
Thy restless waves below.

Gave death to thee no bands?
Lo! on their prison floor
Of brown and spangled shifting sands
They seem to beat, with their white hands,
The measure of thy roar;

Heaving up and down,
Whilst my sad tears flow,
Singing a psalm, in the evening calm,
For captives down below.

Lovest thou not to keep
Treasures of flesh and blood
From aching hearts and eyes that weep?
Tell me, thou woeful, wailing deep,
And melancholy flood;
Sobbing in thy ebb,
Throbbing in thy flow,
For many a brave in that broad grave,
Thy folding shroud below !





My Beautiful Rose.

A PRIMROSE—the first, what a beauty ! 'tis bliss
To meet such a pretty peace-maker as this.
'Tis strange, but last night I was dreaming :— I stood
Alone in the heart of a great cypress wood,
World-weary, faint-hearted, sick, hungry and cold,
When a quaint little Fairy came up through the mould,
Who chatted, whilst pushing aside the dead leaves,
Of Summer's love tokens, and golden corn sheaves ;
Then softly she told me bad thoughts were my foes—
I wonder if that was this beautiful Rose !

Welcome, dear herald of all things sweet,
Blossoming up beneath my feet ;
Blooming with innocence, beaming with grace,
Looking so lovingly up in my face ;
Charming, chaste, delicate, dainty and fair,
Bright bonny angel-thing mocking my care ;
Bearing to mortals a message of love,
Lifting my thoughts to the Eden above.
Heaven has sent us glad tidings by thee,—
Beautiful Rose, thou art welcome to me !

Welcome her, Zephyrs, that wander about ;
Wake all the Daisies that sleep in your route ;
Call the gay Crocus and Violet blue ;
Bring out pure Golden Cups brimming with dew ;

Lift the sweet Cowslip, and tempt the brown Bee,
Raise the light Bluebells, and ring them with glee.
Fie, naughty Zephyr ! ah ! why do you stay
Kissing this dear little virgin all day,
Modest and pale as a soft summer moon ?
Beautiful Rose, hast thou risen too soon ?

Welcome her, singing birds, silent so long,
Greet her with carols, and praise her with song ;
Whistle, gay Finch, with the yellow gold's tinge ;
Laugh, merry Lark, by the fleecy cloud's fringe ;
Warble, gay pupils of Heaven's good King :
Has He not sent her to tell you 'tis spring ?
Ah ! you are making—love making I vow !
When were you ever so happy as now ?
Flitting like spirits, 'mid new budding boughs,
Over the head of my beautiful Rose.

Queen of the dingle, I knew a glad time
When I was as free as a flower from crime ;
But I have wandered from Heaven, ah me !
What would I not give to be sinless like thee !
Dear little Rose, 'tis a mercy we met ;
I may be better and happier yet.
Hither, life-hating, I came with a sigh,
Weary with sorrow and longing to die ;
But thou hast given my spirit repose,
And I do love thee, my beautiful Rose.





Winter Violets.

THERE they are ! blue as my first lover's eyes ;
Tokens of love ever tender ;
Heralds of hope to all hearts of the wise,
Wearing humility's splendour.
Dear little tender things,
Fair little slender things !
Bright as the hopes of my childhood ;
Smiling at come what may,
All the black winter day,
Out in the blast-shatter'd wild wood.

Sweet little daughters of Beauty and Grace,
I should be sad to forsake you ;
You shall not die in this desolate place,
But to my heart I will take you !
Come, pretty violets !
Neat little violets !
Hark ! how the bitter winds wrangle,
Down where the merry rill
Leaps o'er the water-mill,
And the wild cherry boughs tangle.

When the sad zephyr comes over the brook,
When it comes over to kiss you,
How it will search all the gray bramble-nook ;
How it will murmur to miss you !

Violets ! Violets !
Sweet-blooming violets !
Sweet as the breath of an angel !
Heralds of love to man,
Smiling in summer's van,
Preaching in Beauty's evangel.

Why should we sigh for life's loftier spheres,
More than this beautiful cluster ?
By the endurance of trials and fears
Souls win their infinite lustre.
In the black midnight time
Stars wear their golden prime—
Pluck is a king in disaster ;
War proves the hero great,
Love maketh trouble sweet,
Self is humanity's blaster !





A Summer Idyl.

APRIL is gone ! 'Twas midnight when she crept
Out from the tent of Time, with a sad sigh,
To kiss her darling daisies while they slept
On a green carpet 'neath the summer sky.

April is past ! but she has made the print
Of angel footsteps in her happy way.
April is dead ! but she has left a mint
Of wealth and glory for her daughter May.

Wake ! Beauty, wake ! Lo ! from her starry couch,
In fresh spring robes, with new-born joy elate,
The fruitful earth bounds up at morning's touch
To greet her lover at the eastern gate.

Hail, Summer Sun ! on thy imperial throne,
Whilst thy warm kisses rain on all below—
Thine was the task to roll away the stone
From Beauty's grave beneath the winter snow.

O splendid spirit of creative Spring !
Where—where is Death on such a morn as this ?
Lo ! from his dusky kingdom, while I sing,
Ten thousand captives burst to life and bliss !

The rapid swallow, screaming with delight,
Darts o'er the shining flood ; the cuckoo calls ;
The orchard trees are draped with banners white,
And song-birds revel in their verdant halls.

Come, careworn souls, from the sin-haunted town,
And learn to love the glorious haunts of health,
The dark green wood, the dell, and lofty down.

Come out and see the great Creator's wealth!

Out from the city darkness I have brought
My heart to drink the sunshine. This may prove
The blooming place of some peace-making thought,
And add fresh sweetness to the sweets of love.

Tell me what fairer gem can fortune buy
Than this bright dew-drop on an emerald spire?
Nay, 'tis no dew-drop that we wander by,
But a grand spark of the Eternal fire!

Thou canst not form, nor people, nor sustain
One world like that which sparkles on the sod;
And if thou couldst to such perfection gain,
What then, O man! wouldst thou be like to God?

Teeming with life, uncounted millions more
Glitter around, and each proclaims this fact:—
If all the skill was thine, thou art too poor—
Too poor to find materials for the act.

Lift up thy dainty foot, sweet lady fair,
And thou canst crush full twenty worlds to death;
Yet with this knowledge thou dost hardly dare
Bestir a dew-drop's billow with thy breath.

Hail! bonny May! to thee this rill of song
Runs from my heart with gladness; in thy reign
A host of glories round my fancy throng—
A lovely host I may not view again.

This is the time when the Great Spirit sends
Love messages to all. There is no flower
But what doth woo us to be better friends
With our best Lover in this summer hour.

This is the time when we may almost see
His gracious hand, from which all blessings fall.
Adieu, sweet May; when thou art here with me,
Heaven is near, and Love is over all.





“Bo-Peep!”

I HAVE often asked my mem'ry
For an idol of fine gold,
That was buried down in Devon
In the blessèd days of old;
But I only heard the slamming
Of a mighty leaden door,
And the voice of hopeless Sorrow,
Crying, “Never, never more.”

I have sought among old treasures—
I have hunted all the past—
For a picture of my darling,
But my joy is come at last.
I have had an angel's visit,
And a spell from trouble free,
For my baby sister's spirit
Came and played bo-peep with me.

In our pretty cottage garden,
Near a drowsy lettuce bed,
Where the scarlet runners wandered,
Weaving love-knots overhead,
I was resting, labour-weary,
In the downy lap of Sleep,
When I caught the merry tinkle
Of a voice that said “Bo-peep!”

Where a flock of moths came flirting
With the flowers, sweet and fair—
Where the brown bee swam, to labour
In a sea of scented air ;
O'er the wall, with ivy mantled,
Where convolvulus blossoms creep,
Came again the charming tinkle
Of a voice that said " Bo-peep !"

Peering through a vernal curtain,
Looking in among the leaves,
Parted in a happy moment
By the honey-fingered breeze,
Came a face of sweetest beauty,
Such as mem'ry loves to keep,
And again the silvery tinkle
Of a voice that said " Bo-peep !"

Tresses like a crown of glory
From her snow-white temple fell,
And her cheeks were rich with beauty,
As a pink-lipped ocean shell ;
But she went I know not whither,
And I woke to watch and weep
For the vision and the tinkle
Of the voice that cried " Bo-peep !"





May Musings.

THIS is the time when happy thoughts grow strong
As angels' arms, that bear our souls afar
To beauty's feast of flowers, love, and song,
And Mercy's banquet on a sin-damned star.

Where the bright waters dance in the green vale,
Where pale, sweet roses smile their lives away,
Where the wild wood-dove tells its tender tale,
I will go forth to meet my Lady May.

Lo ! I have trod the meadow's flowery floor,
And I am here, where I delight to be.
Time's fairest daughter hath returned once more ;
Beautiful spirit ! I am here with thee.

Hail ! bright-robed beauty, laden with perfume
Of love's distilling in the groves of bliss.
Say, canst thou not some mortal shape assume,
That I might give thee back one burning kiss ?

Thou dost enchant me with thy honied breath ;
All the fair Graces round thee softly say,
" Beauty hath broken from the bonds of death
To live in thee, my gracious Lady May ! "

Hark ! how the warm winds shake the light bluebells ;
The dark-framed drone drums out his deep-toned bass ;
The amorous bees float from their dainty cells,
And springs the blithe lark from the emerald grass.

Up ! my glad soul, to thy bright window bars,
And catch the rapture that he gaily flings
To his loved mate among the meadow stars.

Dear lord of love, how sweet thy pupil sings !

Stay ! darling leader of earth's feathered choir,
And let me share the pleasures of thy flight
Towards the focus of ethereal fire,
That I may bathe in God's grand sea of light !

There will we linger on those silvery isles
That drop soft shadows on each crystal stream ;
But I should miss a lovesome maiden's smiles :
Why comes she not to share my blissful dream ?

Fly, fragrant zephyr, to her rose-wreathed bower,
And tarry not in all the tempting way
To taste the sweetness of the sweetest flower
Dame Nature woke to greet my Lady May.

And when thou com'st to where her cottage peeps
Out from the elm-grove by the village lane,
Do thou climb up to where she sweetly sleeps,
Waft the red buds, and tap her lattice pane.

If a sweet smile her ruby lips doth part,
Disturb her not, dear messenger of mine ;
Her smiles are blossoms of a loving heart,
And but for them how poor my own would pine.

Then, when she waketh from her blest repose,
And whilst she cometh to the trysting tree,
Thou shalt caress her cheek, and kiss the rose
Virtue and health have planted there for me.

Tell her I sit beneath the flowery thorn,
Weaving a coronal for my heart's bride.
Then she will say, " My lover is forlorn ;"
Then she will haste to nestle by my side.

Tell her—but, ah ! my blissful dream is past.

Here lies one poor dead flower. What doth it say ?
 “ Though Death’s dark winter will not always last,
 Remember, man, it is not always May ! ”



A Mother's Trial.

YES, I must lose thee, baby sweet ;
 How hard my darling fights for breath ;
 How his poor little hands and feet
 Are toiling to escape from death.
 But death will not forsake his prey,
 Nor listen to my crying ;
 He always takes the best away—
 My darling babe is dying !

Hush ! baby’s dying—dying fast,
 And yet the battle is not fought ;
 God, how my soul doth shrink aghast
 From this dread rattle in his throat !
 Dear little love, he will not live
 To weep when I am sighing ;
 But what’s the wealth I would not give
 If baby were not dying ?

Hush ! baby’s dying—let me kiss
 Its sweet white lips before we part ;
 O Jesus dear ! what, what is this
 My arms are folding to my heart ?
 Ah ! this is what poor mortals dread,
 All care and hope defying ;
 ’Tis hard to see my darling dead,
 But worse to see him dying.



May's Welcome.

— —

A SONG for May, for flowery May,
The mother of rosy June ;
Merrily let us sing to-day,
And joyful be the tune.
There's never a blade, bud, bee, or bird,
But loveth the Queen of Spring ;
And I pity the soul that hath not heard
That voice which bids me sing,
To welcome beautiful May.

Spirits of love from groves of bliss
Caress the fruitful earth—
Her bosom is thrilled with Mercy's kiss,
Her cheeks are bright with mirth ;
Nothing hath life but what it shares
The warmth of an angel's lip,
From the heart of the oak to the blade that bears
A pearl on its tender tip—
To welcome beautiful May.

Come to the brake where the blackbird sings,
Where sweet-breathed violets grow,
Where butterflies float on glorious wings,
And musical streamlets flow.

Gather the wild gems pretty and bright,
Fresh from Infinity's hand,
Spangled with jewels the Spirit of Light
Hath sprinkled over the land—
To welcome beautiful May.

Up and away in your happiest mood,
Come from the sorrowful town ;
Laugh in the heart of the wealthy wood,
Dance on the purple down.
The Lord of nature loveth to see
His creatures gratefully gay,
As birds that sing in the flowery tree—
To welcome beautiful May.





Down in the Blackberry Dell.

A SONG.

DOWN in the blackberry dell, pretty Kate,
Down in the blackberry dell ;
Where you and I met by the mill meadow gate—
You ought to remember it well, pretty Kate,
You ought to remember it well.

'Twas there that I prayed
For your love—half afraid
Lest sweet lips should utter hope's knell ;
But your happy reply
Was a blush and a sigh,
As we stood in the blackberry dell, pretty Kate,
As we stood in the blackberry dell.

'Tis years since I told you, my beautiful Kate,
'Tis years since I told you my love ;
But don't you remember, my beautiful Kate,
Our sweet little walk from the mill meadow gate,
In the lane by the wild cherry grove.

'Tis pleasant to dream
Of the flower-fringed stream,
The fern-covered fall, and that spell
Love threw from your eyes,
In that dear paradise
We found in blackberry dell, darling Kate,
That we found in the blackberry dell.

This world is a blackberry dell, happy Kate,
Where true love and beauty may bloom ;
Though flowers are mingled with thorns, happy Kate,
The grave of the good is a God guarded gate
That leads to a holier home.

Then come joy or care,
I will never despair,
Never mourn for the pleasures that dwell
In the Eden we miss ;
But 'twas sweeter than this
When we met in the blackberry dell, happy Kate,
When we met in the blackberry dell.





Autumn Sunset.

COME hither, come forth, my love, my mate,
And see the kingly sun retire ;
'Tis like a mighty angel, Kate,
Passing through heaven's regal gate,
Clad in a robe of fire.
The glory of God is in the west,
His birds are singing His flowers to rest ;
Come, if thou lovest what I love best,
And see the day expire.

Come hither, come out before the stars,
And I will show you blazing miles
Of silver, dun, and amber bars,
More brilliant than the bloom of Mars,
And crowds of coral isles.
O tarry not, love—the spirit of light
Seems waiting to wish us all good night ;
Come, if thou lovest my heart's delight,
And catch his parting smiles.

Look at that lovely mount of snow,
See where 'tis rent in twain
Rivers of gold flash out and flow,
Down to the blue abyss below,
And o'er the azure main.

The skies are grand—the earth is fair,
As if its trouble, sin, and care,
Lay dead beneath the knees of prayer,
No more to wake again.

Bend low, my love, and let us pray,
That when our race is run,
As calmly as this autumn day
Our souls may glide and drift away
To the Eternal Sun.

Thus may the glory of thy life
Be gathered to its close, sweet wife;
Then peace shall gild the clouds of strife,
When time's dark threads are spun.





The Melancholy Bell.

UP the steeple of Saint Simon,
Groaning like a wounded lion,
Dying in the utter darkness
Of a far-off forest den,
There's a hermit, sad and lone,
Wailing while the minutes fly,
And the meaning of his moan
Is a houseless soul's good-bye.
But the apathetic crowd,
Walking by the steeple tall,
Where the crier crieth loud,
Say, 'Tis nothing, after all—
Nothing better, less or more,
Than a melancholy bell,
Singing some poor body's knell;
But I know 'tis something more
Than a bell,
In its cell,
Where the shadows love to dwell;
There's a spirit
Living in it,
I can hear it, every minute;
And the burden of its cry,
As it rocketh to and fro
In an agony of woe,

Is a question, asking why,
Will you never, never, never,
Let me die,
Let me die?

O, that fear-awaking clamour,
It is as the mighty hammer
Of the great destroying angel
Thundering at my spirit's door.
In the distance of my youth
I have heard its voice—but now
'Tis a thunderbolt of truth,
Falling on a wrinkled brow;
And my trouble groweth sore,
For I know that I am near
To that breaker-bounded shore,
Where the bravest soul must fear.
Oh, what pain it is to list
To the lonely hermit's cry,
And his pitiful good-bye,
To a soul enthralled in mist!
How it trills,
How it thrills,
How it chills the joy it kills.
There's a spirit
Writhing in it;
I can feel it every minute,
Howling like a tempest gust,
At the palace gates of thought,
Bursting from its iron throat,
Crushing mortal hope to dust
With his solemn, Are you ready?
Die you must,
Die you must.

Throbbing like the heart of sorrow,
'Tis the tocsin of to-morrow,
Tolling in the vale of shadows,
Haunted by a host of fears.

I can hear the heavy tramp
Of the swift approaching foe,
Walking down the dismal swamp,
In the path I have to go.
He will trample on my tears,
He will slay me with his breath ;
Oh, this ringing in my ears
Is the supper-bell of death.

Lo! the guests are flocking in,
With their faces white as snow,
While it rocketeth to and fro,
With a sad, prophetic din,
And the dong,
Deep and strong,
Of a melancholy song.

'Tis the lion
Of Saint Simon,
He has not a hope to die on.
I will tell you why he cries,
'Tis a secret you should know :
There's a torment down below,
Like the worm that never dies—
Like the worm that never dieth,
Never dies.
Never dies.

Toll it quicker, quicker, quicker ;
See, the guests are flocking thicker
Down the valley of the shadow,
Driven by the German lance.
And the weeping angels say,

By the awful Pantheon door,—
God have mercy ever more :
Sister Peace is far away
From the brow of bleeding France,
Where the brave are mad with ire,
And the passion-furies dance,
In a storm of blood and fire,
To the weeping widow's tune,
To the wailing of the child,
And the cannon's thunder wild,
On the field with horrors strewn
In the fray.
Lack-a-day !
Let us pray the curse away ;
For the lion
Of Saint Simon,
That has not a hope to die on,
Is a better, kinder thing
Than a hero grown in war,
On a battle-blasted star,
Or a people-killing king.
Yes, thank Heaven, it is better—
Let it ring,
Let it ring.





No Rain. *

SPIRIT of song, come down to me
With music in thy train,
And let my soul go forth with thee
In this wild wail for rain.
There is no flower of Adam's seed
In Nature's garden gay
Too poor to praise, too rich to need,
Or beautiful to pray,
For rain, God's rain,
The summer rain,
That seems so far away !

The sky glows bright above our heads
As Heaven's jasper wall ;
Fainter than flowers on their beds
Our troubled spirits fall.
The rill is absent from the glade,
The arm of death is strong ;
The green is gone from bough and blade,
And this is Nature's song,—
No rain, with pain
We all complain ;
No rain—O Lord, how long ?

* I wish to add to these lines a most remarkable fact : I was surprised whilst composing the last stanza, by a beautiful shower of rain.—J. G.

No rain—day after day returns,
Up from each dewless night ;
The red sun glares, the hot air burns,
And the world's face grows white.
No rain—our hearts are in the grip
Of Fear that cries aloud ;
No rain for our great planet ship,
No water from the cloud ;
No rain to gain,
No long lost rain
For the earth's thirsty crowd.

No rain, no rain ; we fret, we pine ;
We fear a coming dearth ;
Grim want has made our water wine ;
We know what rain is worth.
Death from the sun his arrow hurls
To strike my brother clod :
He drops, he dies, and we are churls—
What shall we do, O God,
For rain, fresh rain,
Life-giving rain ?
Teach us to kiss Thy rod.

No rain, no rain, what ! never more ?
Do thou, my spirit frail,
Creep on thy knees to Mercy's door
And leave thy sinful wail.
Ah ! now avaunt, foul fears that lie !
For, like an angel's frown,
Dark rain-clouds gather on the sky—
Hark ! how it rattles down
O'er hill and plain.
Thanks for this rain !
Thus love doth courage crown.



Thanks for the Rain.

WAKE, beast and bird,
Wake, insect tribes that hum,
And thou, my soul, by mercy stirred,
Wake, for the rain is come.
Lo ! heaven's gift is ours ;
Come, let us praise the Sender
For the blessing which He pours,
In His mercy ever tender,
From His almoner the cloud,
On the land and bounding river ;
Hark, as it falls, how sweet and loud
It singeth to a thirsty crowd—
His love endureth ever.

Hail ! sparkling gift,
As beams of glory run,
Flashing, bright, beautiful, and swift,
Forth from their parent sun.
From His nectar wells above
He is pouring forth His treasure,
To remind us of that love
We may win, but never measure.
And the falling rain has said
To each doubting son and daughter,
“ Away with all thy fear and dread,
For He that gives thy daily bread
Will not deny thee water.”

Lift up your heads,
Ye fainting gems that sink,
Scorched by the blaze, on your hard beds ;
Lift up your heads and drink.
Rise, drooping shrub and plant,
In garden, grove, or bower,
Heaven has sent the boon you want :
Come, sip the golden shower ;
For that falleth not in vain
Which has made your strength the greater ;
Up, then, and thank Him for the rain
That gave you back your smile again,
And made your sweetness sweeter.

Ye winds that blow,
Held by the hand Divine,
And thou the stream that murmured low,
Come, blend your thanks with mine.
Break forth with joy and sing
A thrilling lay of duty,
For there is no voiceless thing
In all this world of beauty.
Yet this earth is trod by some
That feel no thanks to warble ;
Ungrateful, blind, and deaf, and dumb :
And when to them God's mercies come,
Do not His angels marvel ?





The Snow.

'TIS morn—and o'er the sod
A livid globe of flame,
A miniature of nature's God,
Below the home by angels trod,
Hangs in its massive frame.
It is the king of day,
The glorious glowing sun ;
But over summer's blue array
He wears a robe of dusky grey,
The homeless winds have spun.
I see his glory wane,
I hear the north wind blow,
And, gazing through my lattice pane,
I wake my harp's ecstatic strain
To welcome heaven's snow—
The whirling, curling snow,
That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
Or die the sky below.

'Tis come—the pure, the bright,
The virgin snow is come ;
The earth is clad in raiment white,
Woven by waving spires of light
In the frost spirit's loom,
Over the busy town,
Over the forest bare ;
Over the vale and o'er the down,
The gentle snow drops softly down

Through hazy realms of air.
Oh, what can merry spring,
Or rosy summer show,
Or what can wealthy autumn bring
To match the gift of winter's king,
Old England's crown of snow?

 The whirling, curling snow,
 That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
 Or die the sky below.

The snow—in which we see
His love that never dies,
The bloom of God's eternal tree,
The blossom of infinity,
Is flowing from the skies.
We know there beats beneath
The throbbing life of spring—
We know 'twas Mercy flung this wreath
From heaven's window o'er the heath,
Therefore we gaily sing:
Come down, ye dancing flakes,
Come, till the hill tops grow,
And all our vales are silver lakes,
For I love all that Nature makes.

 There's beauty in the snow,
 The whirling, curling snow,
 That wavers in its flow,
As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
 Or die the sky below.

'Tis night, and with its gloom
The sable pall of cloud
Is shattered by the winds that roam.
The sky is in its golden bloom,

The earth is in her shroud,
 And from that hoary land
 Washed by the Polar waves,
 Where the brave Franklin and his band
 Were smitten by death's icy hand,
 And hid in heroes' graves,
 The mighty frost is come;
 And while the star-lamps glow,
 The stream that sang is stricken dumb.
 Nor bird, nor bee, may wake to hum
 A carol to the snow,
 The whirling, curling snow,
 That wavers in its flow,
 As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
 Or die the sky below.

The frost—'tis come once more.
 Oh, cruel frost, away,
 Thou art not welcome to the poor.
 When poverty comes in the door
 Love goeth out, they say;
 But 'tis not always so.
 There are many trusting hearts
 That love each other best in woe,
 And will not let their angel go
 When Fortune's smile departs.
 Then welcome be the snow,
 Her follower, the frost,
 And all that heaven doth bestow;
 But woe is ours if we should know
 That life or love was lost
 Through the whirling, curling snow.
 That wavers in its flow,
 As if 'twere loth to touch the earth,
 Or die the sky below.



Two Towers and a Cross.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

I STOOD in my youth,
With the dear lady Truth,
On a lovely tall tower of gold ;
I saw at my feet
All the world, heaven sweet,
And my glee was a joy to behold.
The winds in their route
Flung my laughter about,
My heart was the palace of Hope,
That crowned me with flowers
All the happy-go-hours,
When care was a feather to cope.

I wandered away,
On a merry spring day,
To follow the star of my fate ;
I gave a bright tear
To a little wild Fear,
And whispered good-bye at the gate.
But Fear followed fast,
As a ghost of the past,
From my tower so near the calm sky ;
And this was his wail,
Ringing down through the vale,
“ You will never come back till you die.”

O! brave in those days
 Was the hope I must praise,
 That charmed all the journey along ;
 My pathway was strewn
 With the glories of June,
 And my soul was a lark in full song.
 Each fresh virgin hour
 Brought gifts to my dower,
 That raised me all trouble above ;
 And life grew doubly sweet,
 While I sung at the feet
 Of my queen in the kingdom of love.

SONG.

Thou hast stolen my heart, bonny, sweet singing dove ;
 I have lost all my peace, lady fair ;
 In the warm summer glow of thy eyes, beaming love,
 And the waves of thy soft silken hair.

I have given my heart, pretty, coy, singing dove,
 For a smile from thy fond spirit store ;
 I will give thee my life for the wealth of thy love,
 And I'll bless thee with thanks evermore.

By the soft crimson couch of thy kiss-wooing lips,
 By thine eyes, with their soul-welding glow,
 By the love-sparks that leap from thy fair finger tips,
 And that sigh from thy bosom of snow,

I know thou art mine, and my heart is thy throne ;
 What now in the world shall I fear ?
 Happy me! I am thine, and the angels alone
 May tell how I love thee, my dear.

I sung in my prime,
 To the wedding bells' chime,

“ My strength is a tower of brass ;
Whereon I shall stand,
To fight heart and hand,
For the smile of my home-blessing lass.”
My beautiful bride,
Faded, kissed me, and died—
Her beauty is crumbled like bread ;
My strength is no more
Than a reed by the shore,
And my cross is a mountain of lead.

I crept, with my gloom,
To the gate of a tomb,
In a dreary, dark, ghost-haunted dell ;
I saw through the bars
A white face and two stars,—
’Twas the eyes of my lost Isabel.
Dear eyes in kind dreams,
Shedding peace with their beams,
And lighting the grave with their glare ;
Ah me ! when they wane,
All my life’s a black lane,
Leading down to the realm of despair.





A Christmas Idyl.

THE reign of self is past ;
'Tis a merry Christmas morn.
I will welcome love with a joyful blast
From poesy's silvery horn ;
I will waken a spring of mirth,
I will laugh at pale-faced Fear,
For I know the day of our Saviour's birth
Is the happiest of the year.

Oh, better than all beside
Is that time when self departs ;
The angel Peace is Plenty's bride,
When Love is the queen of hearts.

I have lent my harp to Love ;
I will sit at her feet and sing.
She has brought me a song from the palm-tree grove
And notes from melody's spring.
I will fling sweet flowers of thought
From the tip of a happy pen,
And dream of the past, when angels brought
Peace and goodwill to men.

Oh, better than all beside, etc.

How shall the grateful greet
This merriest child of time,
That beareth a load of mercies sweet
To the sons of care and crime?

I have crowned my household gods
With wreaths from the holly-tree ;
My trouble and want shall make light odds,
And the song of my joy shall be—
Oh, better than all beside, etc.

All the little year round,
From the birth of the bud to the snow,
We hear the rich, with blessings crowned,
Praise God from whom they flow.
But that is the sweetest hour
Of all the fleet-winged throng,
Which doubles the poor man's motive power
To sing the rich man's song—
Oh, better than all beside, etc.

Ring, bells in a thousand towers ;
Sing, bards of a Christian land ;
Sing, souls of the poor, in toil-worn bowers ;
Sing, wealth with an open hand.
Oh, this is the gladsome day,
When the Rose of Sharon smiled,
When the Lily of the Vale in the manger lay,
And Christ was a Virgin's child.
Oh, better than all beside
Is the time when self departs ;
For Christ shall be King of the Christmastide,
If Love is the queen of hearts.





The Old Year's End.

TEN minutes left of 'sixty-eight !
Ten grains of golden sand,
Ten swift-winged birds that will not wait,
Ten gifts from Mercy's hand.
Ten serpents gliding through the grass,
Ten brittle threads to twine,
Ten marks on life's highway to pass—
No, no, 'tis only nine.

Nine minutes left of 'sixty-eight !
Nine flakes of melting snow,
Nine vessels with an unknown freight,
Nine secrets yet to know,
Nine angels in each other's train,
Nine ministers of fate,
Nine links of one eternal chain—
Ah ! now 'tis only eight.

Eight minutes of the old year's life !
Eight bubbles on a stream,
Eight loads of joy, or eight of strife,
Eight phases of a dream.
Eight gems to save, eight toys to crush,
Eight blessings to be given,
Eight song-birds singing in one bush—
No, no, 'tis only seven.

Seven little minutes left to count !
Seven arrows in full flight,
Seven of hope's ladder bars to mount,
Seven mercies in my sight.
Seven of hope's roses in their bloom,
Seven tears and smiles to mix,
Seven grave-bound pilgrims walking home--
No, no, 'tis only six.

Six atoms of one little whole,
Six wonders to unseal,
Six paces nearer to my goal,
Six chances more to kneel.
Six pages of a volume vast,
Six boons for souls that strive,
Six tapers burning in a blast—
No, no, 'tis only five.

Five minutes gone ! oh, hearts of all,
Five minutes left to beat !
Five bearers of the old year's pall,
Five mercies less to meet.
Five less to watch, five more to miss,
Five treasures yet in store ;
Five cups of pain, and five of bliss—
No, no, 'tis only four.

Four trifles of a golden thread,
Four atoms of a day,
Four windings in the path we tread,
Four torches by the way.
Four flying phantoms of the past,
Four voices in one glee,
Four sailors clinging to a mast—
No, no, 'tis only three.

Three mighty prophets sent to preach
Three sermons for our weal,
Three apples on a dead sea-beach,
Three turnings of a wheel.
Three rills to cross, three hills to climb,
Three stages to pursue,
Three spectres from the grave of time—
No, no, 'tis only two.

Two torrents down a mountain gorge,
Two wind wails wandering by,
Two sparks from the eternal forge,
Two meteors in the sky.
Two dancers in a narrow ring,
Two reeds to rest upon,
Two feathers of an eagle's wing—
No, no, 'tis only one.

One fragment of a solemn trust,
One barque on death's black river,
One red leaf falling down to dust,
One word before we sever.
Year of the great earthquake, good night !
Thou wert, but art not mine ;
Hope points us to the New Year's light,
And welcomes—'SIXTY-NINE.





New Year Musings.

PRAISE God from whom all blessings spring,
Another year is born ; and now
To Love or Self, which shall we bow—
Which of the twain shall be our king ?

When Christmas brought to hall and cot
The rarest gifts from Plenty's horn,
Self was a thing condemned to scorn ;
Shall Self resume its sway or not ?

Son of December, wild and strong,
Uplift us on thy shoulders broad,
And bear thy predecessor's load,
But bear us not toward the wrong.

Hail, leader of the mystic twelve !
That bring us frost, rain, fruit, or flowers.
Through all the calm or fretful hours
In which we sweetly sleep or delve.

The mass of love's Eternal Son,
Our feast of joy and holy mirth,
Has left its shadow on the earth—
The good old year is dead and gone.

What lessons have we learnt from pain ?
How have we drilled our souls to bear
Our daily fight with cruel care ?
What have we lost by worldly gain ?

Our moments are as grains of gold,
Whether they bear us woe or balm ;
Sweet Mercy drops them in our palm,
Yet they are more than we can hold.

Oh, people of this wondrous globe,
Is it not well that we should know
What wealth our deathless souls can show
When we are in the grave's white robe ?

Oh, beggar on a planet's breast,
Barefooted, wretched, faint, and worn—
Counted a tare among the corn,
And spurned as an unwelcome guest—

All that thou canst be worth to man
Do thou be worth ; but this above,—
Count what you cost the Lord of love—
Sum your soul's value if you can.

Hold ! wreck of beauty, ere you part
The peaceful flood that tempts you down ;
What are you worth ? Lo ! life's bright crown
Is offered for your broken heart.

Street Arabs, of our city fair—
Poor faultless spawn of social crime—
What are you worth in this glad time ?
Ah me ! you little know nor care.

What art thou worth, O man of rank,
With all thy wealth the dead year gave ?
What store hast thou beyond the grave ?
What faith hast thou in Mercy's bank ?

What on the poor dost thou bestow
Of all that gold to which you cling ?
What are thy deeds that they should sing,
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ?

Pinch not the widow, lone and frail ;
Turn not the orphan from thy gate ;
Remember Dives and his fate ;
Let Christian charity prevail.

Be just to labour's sons, and give
More than the gleanings of the field,
When fate doth fortune's favours yield.
Live, man—but let thy brother live.

Do good, and break Self's iron rod ;
Then shall this orb, with sweeter charms,
Be circled in a seraph's arms,
And Love shall bear us up to God.





A New Year's Idyl.

WHAT weal shall I wish you, good masters,
In my poor lay?
The black year of human disasters*
Is far away—
Away, like the wind wails that wander in space
Or perish in distance; but heaven is kind:
The new year is born with a cloud on its face,
The old year of sorrow has left us behind.
Life is a golden store,
If we have nothing more,
When death is near the door
All the year long.

The old year is buried, like Moses,
Who knoweth where?
Spring will return with fresh roses,
Fragrant and fair;
Summer, the bright, with her silver-tongued throng,
Autumn, the bountiful, laden with grain,
Winter, the frost-spirit, bitter and strong,
And Christmas, the merry, will come back again.
What will these bring to thee?
How doth hope cling to thee?
Sweet may she sing to thee
All the year long!

* Referring to the great earthquake which occurred in South America.

The sky is a beautiful blue one
 Over my head ;
The old year is gone, and the new one
 Runs after the dead :
So blue was the sky when life's journey began ;
 So after the past we shall run while we part ;
But the heaven of youth is not dear to the man,
 If hope is an exile away from the heart ;
 But if the heart is right,
 All will be well and bright ;
 Thou shalt see heaven's light
 All the year long.

The world speedeth on, never breathless,
 Round the great sun ;
O spirits of men, ever deathless,
 So let us run :
Weep not for the past—look aloft, and be wise ;
 From their happy home, the blue star-land beyond,
Fond angels are bending with wonder-lit eyes
 To welcome our souls from mortality's bond :
 May the sweet trinity,—
 Faith, love, and charity,—
 Lend us their company
 All our lives long.





A Dream of Death.

I SAW a kingdom, in my sleep,
Where man shall never wake to weep—
A world of horror. Blank and bare,
Without a hope, without a care ;
Unblest by love, uncurst by crime—
A world beyond the reach of time :
A bubble's wreck, an empty skull,
An ugly nought, of nothing full ;
Devoid of motion, change, or breath,—
A ghastly sepulchre of death,
A realm by nought but fancy trod,
Where Death was God.

Hard by that land of silence deep,
Where man shall never wake to weep,
I saw a weary craven creep ;
With abject air and solemn tread,
As mutes that stalk beside the dead,
Crawl through the city. So he crept,
And sighed, and cried, and raved, and wept
And howl'd for death, as if 'twere bliss
To barter life for nothingness.
Was it a blast of fear or doubt
That blew the lamp of reason out ?
Down that dark lane poor Judas trod.
He walks like one forgot by God,
Dragg'd by despair, the dungeon king,

From cave to cave, where syrens sing
Of peaceful rest in flossy pools,
Drugs, halters, bullets, and bright tools
That float around him in the air,
Like Macbeth's dagger, sharp and bare.
Save us, sweet Heaven, from the foes
That crowd around him as he goes—
Goes where? I miss him in my dream—
Has that tall shadow in his van,
Or did this grave, eat up the man?
I halt beside a purple stream,—
I hear the slamming of a door,—
An awful voice said, Never more:
You scorned your life, you dared to die,
You sought for Death,—and here am I.

Oh, Lord, what joy it was to wake
In this fair world of life once more;
The moon flood, on my chamber floor,
Shone like a silver lake.
And yet with life there cometh pain;
I hope I shall not sleep again
To dream that dream, and yet I know
The lamp of life is turning low,
But Care forsakes his iron plough
When the sweet angel bids him. How
Softly these silk-fringed curtains fall
Over the shining windows! All
The flood of glory from above
Fades, like the blush of virgin love;
Those guardian angels Heaven sent
Are watching round an empty tent:
I wander where I would not bide
For this fair world and worlds beside;

I see that kingdom in my sleep,
Where man shall never wake to weep.

The sea lay waveless on its bed,
All things within were smitten dead,
And high above the lifeless flood
Hung, like a frosted bowl of blood,
A ghostly, smouldering moon, that sat
Still as the ark on Ararat,—
Sat in a mighty spectre's palm,
Upstanding, in the awful calm,
Atop the roof of Vulcan's forge ;
And thus said he: Like this, for aye,
Fools fling the jewel of life away.
Then, far adown the mountain gorge,
He flung the lurid ball, that lit
The vast, unfathomed, gaping pit ;
There, there it paused, I know not why.
'Twas like the ball of Satan's eye,
An eye malignant, glinting through
A rented pall of inky hue—
A rented pall of darkness, spread
Over the grave of all things dead.
Yet by its fitful, sickly beam
The dreary region of my dream
Was half revealed, that I might see
The grave of life ; but, dreary me !
Lest that we might its secrets tell,
That death, which always comes too soon,
Crept, like a shadow, up the dell, and ate the moon.





Something to cheer you.

LIFE has many happy moments ;
'Tis not that beclouded thing
Which some broken spirits tell us,
Which some mournful poets sing.
Life brings not perpetual sorrow,
And the heart is poor indeed
If from hope it cannot borrow
In the season of its need.

Oh, thou faint and weary swimmer,
In the troubled sea of life,
Tell me not that thou art hopeless ;
Be not careless of thy life ;
For thou hast this cause to love it—
'Tis thy great Creator's boon :
And the rest which thou dost covet
May be thine perchance too soon.

Cheer, ye craven-hearted mortals !
Ye that murmur, grieve, and fret,
Shake the grave-gloom from your features ;
You may win the battle yet.
Slave of Care, thy gall-cup quaffing,
O'er the tomb of Pleasure dead,
Listen ! there 's a skylark laughing
In the cloud above thy head.

What is Care that man should hold her
In his heart a welcome guest ?
More than Hope why dost thou love her ?
Light or darkness—which is best ?
Know you not, my stricken brother,
If thy soul doth cherish Care,
She may be the dreadful mother
Of that cruel thing, Despair ?

What though thou art doomed to travel
On a rough and thorny track,—
Grief is but a tunnelled mountain
Over, not upon, thy back.
Onward, pilgrim ! never listen
To that fear which bids thee stay,
Though thy hope may only glisten
As a glow-worm by the way.

Art thou rich ? then be thou gracious,
Like the sun that gilds the sod :
Governed by no selfish motive,
Be the almoner of God.
Art thou poor ? be brave and gallant,
Sailing o'er life's stormy main ;
Pay thy passage with thy talent,
Hero of the arm or brain !

Life has many happy moments—
Hear me, oh ! ye souls that grope
In the dismal ways of Sorrow ;
Never turn away from Hope,
For she wanders, never sleeping,
Ever singing as she goes—
Cheer up, sad heart, don't be weeping,
God will help you if you choose.



Hope's Image.

WALKING by a wealthy river,
Talking with unhappy thought,
Of my joys that flew for ever,
And the woe that came unsought,
I beheld a pleasant image
Of a patient spirit's hope ;
'Twas a little sunburnt sailor
Sleeping on a coil of rope.

Roving through the crowded city,
There was music in my mind,
Like the songs of love and pity,
Loving, tender, sweet, and kind ;
And my happy fancy weaving
Garlands for a new-found hope,
Saw a little sunburnt sailor
Sleeping on a coil of rope.

Musing in my cottage chamber,
When the sun was in the west,
Robed in purple, gold, and amber,
In the hours of love and rest,
When the shadows came toward me,
I beheld my morrow's hope,
Like a little sunburnt sailor
Sleeping on a coil of rope.

To his duty he will waken,
 And he will the cable trust,
 When his gallant ship is shaken
 By the ocean tempest gust.
 So when life's wild storms are over,
 May we rest on Heaven's hope,
 Like that little sunburnt sailor
 Slumbering on a coil of rope.



Stanzas to my absent Brother.

SON of my mother, come back to my heart,
 Woe is mine that we should part ;
 Thrice the daisy and twice the frost
 Have decked her grave since thou wert lost.
 Many a time to mine and me
 Hope has sung good news of thee ;
 The song has lost its charms, and now
 My hand is on an aching brow ;
 My cheek is as the bloom of May,
 And as I muse I sigh and say—
 Gone, he's gone, I know not whither,
 Gone from my heart perchance for ever.

Brother of mine, why didst thou flee
 Father, sister, home and me,
 And all the sweetness of that home,
 To brave the perils of the foam ?
 Ah me ! thy father, poor old man,
 His locks are grey, his features wan,

He may, he may—but God forbid—
Ere thou dost come, he may be hid
With our first love. Oh cruel fate,
If he should come, and come too late.
Gone, he's gone, I know not wither,
Gone from my heart perchance for ever.

Brother, for thee, bereft of hope,
My spirit doth in darkness grope ;
I watched for tidings, night and morn,
Until a cruel fear was born,—
A hideous fear I strove to kill,
Yet he is my companion still.
One night I heard the Storm-King rave,
Then love to me her pinions gave ;
Through the gloom and over the sea
My soul went forth in search of thee.
Gone, he's gone, I know not whither,
Gone from my heart perchance for ever.

I saw, a thousand leagues away,
Wrapt in a shroud of misty spray,
As stout a ship as ever flew
Across the waters green or blue ;
A chariot of the ocean god's,
Whose spars were tough as willow rods,
Driven before the angry blast.
And, lashed against the bending mast,
I saw a form,—that form was thine,
Another moment then 'twas mine.
Gone, he's gone, I know not whither,
Gone from my heart perchance for ever.

Yes, thou wert mine, but what wert thou ?
The stamp of death was on thy brow,

A ghastly smile lay on thy face,
I held thy corse in my embrace.
The winds blew wild, the sea ran mad,
My brother was calm, but I was sad ;
I wept, I raved, and strove to pierce
The heavens with my shrieking fierce,
But the sky was dark as my despair,
And the storm-fiends laughed to hear my prayer.
Gone, he's gone, I know not whither,
Gone from my heart perchance for ever.

Up from his bed, towards the skies,
I saw a white-maned monster rise :
Drove by the winds he went to kiss
A black-lipp'd cloud, with a horrid hiss,—
A black-lipp'd cloud, from which there came
A fork-like tongue of scorching flame ;
And the gallant barque, in her rapid flight,
Was caught by the swifter flash of light.
Then I rode to my doom in a burning ship,
With the corse of my brother in my grip.
Gone, he's gone, I know not whither,
Gone from my heart perchance for ever.

Death in the flame, or death in the wave—
Where shall I meet him, where shall I brave ?
The smoke-wreath curls from her burning spars,
The rigging is thick with fiery stars,
The mantle of night is the colour of blood ;
Brother, adieu ! I will die in the flood :
But his arms were coiled about my neck,
And the mast came down with a crash on the deck—
Thank Heaven, I woke, when death was near,
From a horrible dream that was painted by fear,
Because he's gone, I know not whither,
Gone from my heart perchance for ever.



Care.

I SAID in my heart, I will laugh at Care—
That wretched mother of foul Despair,
Weak minds embrace ;
But my soul grew weary of Falsehood's mask—
True, 'tis better to laugh than sigh ;
But to strangle Thought is a madman's task.
I hate the bloom of a cheek-grown lie,
Such as may grace
A poor idiot's face ;
Yet I fear not Care—I will tell you why.

I do not covet, desire, or crave
To travel with Care to a traitor's grave ;
Full well I trow
'Tis wiser to wrestle with doubt and fear,
Nobler far my cross to bear,
And sweeter to sleep on a hero's bier,
Than 'tis to hurry we know not where ;
Yet would I know,
If any can show,
The way to a world that has no care.

Out from the battle and din of life
There ringeth a cry of souls in strife,
I cannot bear :
Misery's children, haggard and worn—
Hopeless beings, whose hearts are dead—

Whether to want or lux'ry born,
 Are crying for rest, the best should dread,
 Because they wear
 The fetters of Care,
 And walk to their doom in chains of lead.

What sort of a heaven would you obtain ?
 Is indolence all you hope to gain
 By serving God ?
 A purple-robed sloth, whose pillow is wealth,
 Lies farther from bliss than a labour-worn slave,
 That spendeth his time, talent, trouble, and health,
 To buy that existence Infinity gave.
 'Tis fair as 'tis odd
 That a king on the sod
 Bears just as much care as a clown or a knave.

Is there no Care in the world above ?
 Knowest thou not that daughter of Love
 Whose name is Care ?
 I have heard her voice in tell-tale sighs,
 When a maiden's heart lay close to mine ;
 Have seen her throned in a mother's eyes,
 But that Care, oh, Lord ! is not like Thine ;
 I will not dare
 My cherub compare
 With she that cometh of Love divine.

Those beautiful beings, pure as light,
 That minister mercies day and night,
 Say, are they free ?
 Were Adam and Eve before their fall ?
 Or that dear Son of Eternity's Chief,
 That suffered to lighten the sorrows of all—
 Who lifted a load from the penitent thief—

What care had He,
 Who hung on a tree?
 A Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief!

Who is it makes this earth perspire
 That elegant bath, like golden fire,
 We call the dew?

Who hangeth a world on a grass-blade's tip?

Who careth for those that dwell therein?

Who gavè the honey His wild bees sip?

Whose heaven is that we hope to win?

Who careth for you?

Are His cares so few

That we should murmur, and fret, and sin?

A rainbow spanneth the earth's broad roof—

Who was it made that eloquent proof

Of His great care?

Who folds this orb in her flowery robe?

Who knoweth the time when all things die

That ever had birth, on every globe

Which gloweth with love in the midnight sky?

Who holds them there,

In the dark blue air,

And lighteth them all with the flash of His eye?

Is there no Care in the world below?

Heaven forbids that we should know

The lost soul's lot.

Care in heaven is Love's own child;

Care on earth is a pilgrim's load,

Yet more by man than his Maker piled;

But Care in hell is agony's goad.

There is no spot

Where Care is not,

And death is its only antipode.



A Carol to Hope.

HAIL, thou loved minister of light,
Sweet prophet, sent to cheer me ;
Come, arm me with thy weapon bright,
And while with doubt and fear I fight,
Be thou for ever near me.

Hail, seraph, hail ! When the first pair
From Paradise were driven,
Thou didst remain to foil Despair,
And show us with thy finger fair
The mountain path to Heaven.

With thee we bravely climb the steep
And narrow path of duty ;
Without thy smile we sit and weep,
But when the gloom is growing deep,
We love thee, star of beauty.

Sing to my heart, dear minstrel, sing ;
And though I travel tombward,
To thee my grateful soul shall cling ;
For thou wert sent by the great King
To light and guide us homeward.

Tell me the tales you used to tell,
When all the world was golden ;
Before I sighed in sorrow's cell,
While mem'ry toll'd a mournful knell
For the good days of olden.

Paint me a picture of that land
Where thou hast often told me
My absent lovers, hand in hand,
Are waiting by its portals grand,
In their embrace to fold me.

Lend me that magic glass of thine
Which unto youth discloses
A path of bliss—you said was mine—
Arched with the bounty of the vine,
And paved with pleasure's roses.

Thou didst not plant the thorns, I find,
Of pain and disappointment ;
Nay, for thy mission is to bind
The bleeding heart, and heal the mind ;
And thou art mercy's ointment.

Be thou my rainbow overhead,
When clouds of anguish lower ;
Be thou my fainting spirit's bread,
Bring thy bright visions to my bed,
And make my heart thy bower.

Be thou my Philomel by night ;
Be thou my lark to-morrow ;
Thou art on earth an angel knight,
And I will bear thy banner white
To cheer a world of sorrow.

Oh, leave me not whilst I have breath,
Thou gentle, kind, and tender ;
Hold thou my hand until my death ;
Then be thy mighty sister, Faith,
Each trembling soul's defender.



Nathan Heartless.

WHAT Nathan Heartless said or did
May scarce be worth your while to know ;
Yet grains of wisdom may be hid
In the wild oats the Muses sow.
My Muse went threshing in her barn—
Pray take the gist of what she brings ;
I meant just now to spin a yarn,
But who can spin while Nathan sings ?

“ Here I am, all tatters and rags—
Tatters and rags from top to toe ;
I wonder where Dame Fortune lags,
And what the jade doth mean to do.
'Tis hard that she should pass me by
To swell a wealthy neighbour's store ;
They say that she is blind—I'll try
If she can hear poor Nathan's roar.

“ Help, potent goddess—bright and fair—
Deliver me from fear and doubt ;
From the black ditch of grim despair
Do lend a hand to help me out.”
But still Dame Fortune, as before,
Went up and down, and on her way,
Yet would not enter Nathan's door,
Nor even halt to hear him pray.

At length a wealthy kinsman died,
When, lo ! the fickle lady brought
Ten golden guineas ; Nathan cried,
“Thanks be to Death for what I sought.”
Quoth she, “Thou hast no merit shown
By waiting for a dead man’s pelf ;
’Tis better far to earn your own—
God helps the man that helps himself.”

“That’s a rogue’s motto,” answered Nat ;
“Quite worthless to an honest fool
That pays his way. I’ll tell you what :
The world is but a sharper’s school ;
And he that doth not learn to cheat,
Or worship Mammon more than God,
Is a dull scholar Fate may beat—
Ah ! beat to death—he’s but a clod.

“But, madame, since you deign to smile,
I would of thee this secret know—
How shall I swell this yellow pile ?
How shall I make my guineas grow ?
And tell me, since you prove so kind,
If ever I your favour lack,
When you are stricken deaf and blind,
What shall I do to bring you back ?”

“You need not woo me with your wail—
You cannot bring me back with tears—
Hard work may be of some avail.”

And then she whispered in his ears :
“So long as you can jingle gold,
No matter whose that gold may be,
I am your slave, and you will hold
A wand to charm me back to thee.

"To those that own I often add,
 But to the poor I seldom come ;
 Though for my favours men grow mad,
 I seldom mingle with the scum.
 And if to line a poor man's purse
 I bend from Mammon's lofty car,
 Beware ! I sometimes bring a curse ;
 Then, Nathan, want is better far."



My Mother's Grave.

TO-NIGHT above my mother's grave
 The wintry winds are wailing loud,
 The naked willow branches wave,
 The stars are in a death-dark shroud.
 And I, beside my cabin fire,
 With a pale face my hands between,
 Sit singing to a mournful lyre
 A dirge for joys that mine have been.

Saint Paul, thy solemn chimes declare
 Another day of grace is dead ;
 The while I quaff my cup of care,
 With weary heart, with aching head.
 And often as that cup I drain
 From bitter thought's exhaustless spring,
 Will memory fill it up again,
 And bid me drink, that I may sing.

Oft as I muse—ah ! even now,
I feel that I am not alone—
Her kiss is on my burning brow,
Her blessings, in a tender tone,
Drop on my soul as honey sweet—
The music of a happy day
When lowly kneeling at her feet
She fondly taught me how to pray.

Softly she lifts my tear-wet face,
But now my tears are pearls of joy ;
For I am held in that embrace,
And she is weeping with her boy.
But oh ! how cold she grows the while !
How dies the music of her breath ;
How fades the glory of her smile—
I am alone—alone with death !

Nay, not with death, but with the dead ;
For thought is my companion still ;
A pilgrim with life's load of lead,
I climb a steep and thorny hill.
But where's the hand that loved to lead ?
And where the voice that strove to cheer ?
Oh ! I am poor—ah ! poor indeed,
Since I have lost thee, mother dear !

The rebel winds are gone to rest ;
The skies with new-born glory glow ;
Over the earth's half-naked breast
The clouds have spread a sheet of snow.
So o'er my heart a coldness lies,
So coffined in its depths is hid
The past—o'er which my spirit sighs
Often as memory lifts the lid.



Sleep.

HOW wonderful is Sleep ; I have lain dead
Thousands of nights in my Creator's hand
Since I began my journey to that bed

From which I shall arise at His command,
When Death shall snap the scythe of Time in twain,
And all the dead shall burst dull Slumber's chain.

How merciful is Sleep to the poor slave

That does not own a life to save or spend.
In all his thorny pathway to the grave

He will not meet with a more welcome friend
Than Death's balm-laden bride. Sleep lifts the load
From his sad heart, and breaks Oppression's goad.

How bold is Sleep, that doth divest a king

Of dignity, distinction, might, and all
That robe of greatness Fate delights to fling
Around a royal clod. When blessings fall
Direct from heaven like sleep, light, rain, or air,
Distinction dies, and all receive their share.

How pitiful is Sleep ! She does not scorn

The meanest beggar on a couch of straw,
Nor a poor culprit in his cell forlorn.

Sleep doth administer the kindest law
Of human nature. See ! the hangman's prey
Sleeps close to Death, and Hope is far away.

How kind is Sleep! There was a wretch that kept
 Wailing for bread by Fortune's bolted gate.
 Sleep brought her bread from heaven, and she slept,
 Forgetful of her want and the world's hate
 Of poverty, that weeps like a foul sore,
 Where one grows rich by making thousands poor.

What is this life to which we daily rise
 From the soft arms of Slumber? Life should be
 The fortune of a soul that never dies.

But in the hour when Sleep comes down to me,
 I see Life's lamp turned low, by nothing less
 Than God's economy and Sleep's caress.



Memoirs of Mary:

HOME in the land that I love best,
 The fairest of all 'neath heaven,
 Where lovers of mine are laid at rest—
 Home! in beautiful Devon.

We watched for Death one night beside
 A maiden, faint and weary ;
 We knew he was coming to fetch his bride,
 And she was our dear Mary.

From 'neath an ancient chest that stood
 Within that chamber humble,
 A little mouse came in search of food,
 And gathered many a crumble ;

Many a morsel of dainties bought
To tempt the loved one dying ;
Crumbs of offering neighbours brought
To the bed where she was lying.

Softly I whispered, " Mary, sweet ;
Listen—your pet is coming."
Glad was I, for his nimble feet
Had silenced the death-watch drumming—

Drumming away on the chamber wall,
As if 'twould never weary ;
Breaking my heart with its earnest call
For the loving soul of Mary.

As through the snow bright flowers break,
Despite rude Winter's power ;
Broke a sweet smile through the death-white cheek
Of my tender, dying flower !

Her thin, fair hand from mine she drew,
With effort faint at laughter ;
Then to her winsome pensioner threw
The favour he came after.

But once he came for his daily bread.
Alas ! he could not have it ;
His benefactor was lying dead—
The hand was cold that gave it !

She calleth to me from the realms above,
But Death has been my rival ;
He severed the silvery cords of love,
And the Lord forbade my bridal.

One autumn eve the bridegroom Death
Came to my cot in Devon,
And Mary's soul, with the lamp of Faith,
Was wafted away to heaven !

He led her away to the happy land
Across life's troubled river ;
She wept, she smiled, she waved her hand,
And then she was gone for ever !

Death came like a bee ; when spring gems nod,
And the sweetness of my flower
Was borne to the glorious hive of God,
And treasured in Mercy's bower !

Death came like a bee, but his dread sting
Broke in the clay we buried :
Old wounds bleed when memories sing,
And our hearts by fear are worried.

Many are they whose tears were shed
But when we to dust returned her ;
What became of the mouse she fed ?
What of that humble mourner ?

Hard by the way to his secret store,
In a corner solitary,
We found the corpse of the vagrant poor
That wanted the love of Mary !





The Wail of Labour.

THE frost—the toil-destroyer, Frost,
Is with us in the land ;
The toiler's heart is trouble-tost
And idle in his hand.
He hates his life of want and woe ;
He crieth in his dread—
“No work, no hope, what shall we do ?
I wish that I was dead.”

I must not beg, I dare not steal,
Nor murmur at my fate ;
I must not tell the cold I feel
Beside this empty grate.
I must be like a little bird
That did sweet music give,
Then creep away to die unheard.
What right have I to live ?

What right have I to live and be
Less than a useful thing ?
What is my motherland to me
That I should proudly sing,
“O Britons never shall be slaves ?”
Ah ! I could rather weep
Whilst toilers' hopes are in their graves,
And flesh and blood are cheap.

Written to assist an agitation for State aid to emigration.

They tell us that we ought to save
For rainy days a store ;
As if the doom of labour gave
Abundance to the poor.
God of my life, when was it fine
That I should comforts glean ?
It always rains on lives like mine ;
I wonder what they mean.

I never bade my hope good-bye ;
I scorn the phantom "Chance,"
The motto of my heart was "Try,"
My watchword was "Advance."
Advance to what ? I only face
Starvation on the globe.
If I must fall with Cæsar's grace,
Lend me a Cæsar's robe.

Have we not heard of other lands
Where labour is not bound
In blank depression's deadly bands,
And want is seldom found ?
Have we not read of ships that rot,
Lashed to this home of woe
By the red-tapist and his knot ?
Why don't they cut it through ?

Cut the toil-traders' "ifs" and "buts,"
And press them to the point
With the bright blade of Truth, that cuts
Rank error heart and joint.
Not with rude Alexander's rage,
But with the will that longs
To herald in the golden age
By healing labour's wrongs.

What chariot doth the sea-queen own,
 Too costly, good, or grand,
 To bear the poor where wealth is grown
 And kept in labour's hand?
 If war should wake and ask a fleet,
 Would England answer, Nay?
 Are not the claims of love as great?
 What will the Senate say?



Horrible Frost.

O THE frost! the horrible frost!
 Can summer restore the love that's lost
 Whenever it comes to pinch the poor?
 Come hither with me to the widow's door,
 Down here in the dusk of a city lane;
 Creep close, and stay by the window pane.
 The rag is out from the broken square,
 The frost is in with trouble and care;
 And now 'tis the voice of the widow so lone
 That sayeth to God in a pitiful tone:—

“Over the city the bright stars blaze,
 Down in the city I sit and gaze
 With ravenous eyes on a little red spark
 In the grate of my cottage, and soon 'twill be dark.
 My heaven this was, with all comfort in store,
 In the days that are past; will it ever be more?

My hope is gone out like that sparkle of glare
From the last little chip of poor grandfather's chair ;
'Twas shattered to warm us when labour was lost,
And yet I shall die in this horrible frost.

“ Great God of the universe, what is my crime
That I should be bitten to death in my prime
By famine within, and its ally without,
That passed by the door of the rich in its route ?
Ah ! this is my sin, I have not gathered gold,
The day is gone by when I might if I would.
O world, cruel world, 'tis a pity to be
A culprit depending for mercy on thee.
My doom is upon me, and this is the cost—
I shall die, I shall die in this horrible frost.

“ What careth the world for this treasure I hug ?
'Tis only a skeleton wrapt in a rug,
With pulse beating low and a quiver of breath—
A little more starving and then 'twill be death.
Sweet Patty, my darling, thy smile was my bread,
Come kiss your poor mother. Dear God ! she is dead.
The last sigh is gone, and her soul, like the glare
That went from the chip of her grandfather's chair.
There's nothing to love me, my pathway is crost
By the angel of Death in this horrible frost.”





A Voice from Graveland.

'TIS a sweet Sabbath-eve as ever came
In summer splendour through the western gate
Of this fair star's pavilion. Happy Eve
Looks from her palace window to salute
God's eldest wonder, light ; and now she faints
In his illustrious presence. All the west
Blooms with magnificence. O King of day !
Retreating to thy chamber, hast thou not
Shattered thy splendid lamp on the tall top
Of yonder silver mountain ? The blue wold
Is all ablaze with glory. 'Tis the time
When meditation leads us to her bower ;
And that dear passion we have christened Love,
Kindles her thrilling fire. Yet I have trod
Our " Bridge of Sighs " in this delightful hour,
To gossip with sad thoughts ; and now I sit
Beneath a yew-tree in this silent town,
Whose awful chief is Death. I did presume
That Grief would meet me here alone ; but Grief
Walks hand-in-hand with Flora through this rest
Of vernal elegance. I have not dreamt
Of such a lovely dell this side of heaven
As Arno's fragrant valley. O my soul,
How beautifully life and death are blent
In this rare crucible ; this holy land
Is almost like the hollow of His hand

From whom all blessings rain. Delicious thoughts
Float through my mind as flocks of summer doves
That gambol in the sun-blaze. But I know
There will be clouds betwixt this light and me ;
There will be partings, penalties, and pains,
Memory's impeachment, and my soul's regret
For work undone, before I come to sleep
In this quiet dingle colonized by Death
From yonder sin-plagued city. Oh, how kind
Is He that will not leave us in the grave,
Yet from His ways like poor lost sheep we stray,
Led by our ruling passions. Far too well
I know a pair that wandered from His fold ;
Then the Good Shepherd sent his servant, Death,
To take the pet lamb from the mother's heart,
That they might follow after and return,
Depending on His mercy. In this glen
I see a daisied slope on which we wept
Because the lamb was ours—God's will be done.
I am full loth to leave this graceful spot ;
Yet I shall come full soon enough to stay ;
And it may be too soon to be forgot
By all but Him that gives and takes away.
See! round the tenements of those we loved,
How beauty's roses blossom.—Grief appears
As a pale spirit of this sacred grove ;
She waters them to life with her warm tears ;
And then, like beauty's lips, the earth doth part ;
And here such smiles play o'er the sleeper's face,
And such a throng of graces wake to life,
That I can see around thy scythe, O Death,
A sacred wreath of roses, wound by Love.
He that would steal one flower from this fair shrine,
Would strip a corse, and condescend to rob
Corruption's dismal workshop ; 'tis a crime

To be condemned by all, save thieves and those
That have not learned to think. There is no corse
In all this dormitage but what has left
A lesson to be learnt. This grave contains
The valiant city soldier, RICHARD HILL,*
Who, for the sake of peace, fell at his post,
And was with honour buried. As the sea
Engulphs the billows when the tempest dies,
So in the bosom of this charming vale
A pleasant Hill lies mingled with the dust,
The equal of a king.

Weave him a wreath from the green bay-tree,
And a lay in Pity's loom ;
Man knoweth not what his end may be,
Nor the way that end may come.
 Blind Love sayeth low,
 Whilst her wild tears flow,
He fell by a death-blow foul ;
 But the Spirit above
 Knoweth better than Love,
And He cares for the watchman's soul.

* Richard Hill, the unfortunate police-constable, who was murdered whilst in the execution of his duty in Gloucester Lane, Bristol, on the 24th of April last, and interred in Arno's Vale Cemetery.





In Memoriam.

The late Prince Consort.

DROP the white blind, shut out the light,
 Bend low, and let us pray;
Sorrow and Death are infinite,
 And Woe is king to-day.
Our gentle master is no more—
Alas ! for Death has made us poor :
Drop the white blind and close the door.
 There is a guest
 Within my breast
That always loves the darkness best.

Why comest thou to me unsought,
 O Grief, beneath the sun
That sittest in this cell of thought,
 So like a black-robed nun ?
Hither I came with Pain and Death,
That tore a noble Albert wreath
From England's heart. Here all in vain
 I weep for gold
 Death loves to hold
Down in the grave so dark and cold.

Arise, my memory, strong and brave,
And bring me from thy store
Those golden links sweet true love gave
To thee for evermore:
His pity, kindness, truth, and grace,
His deeds of love for every race.
Tell me, O Grief, with thy pale face,
If Death, the just,
Can touch this trust,
Or hide his virtues in the dust?

Listen! I hear a solemn bell,
Bidding his soul Good-bye:
My cup is full from misery's well,
But the good can never die.
Out from its shrine the spirit goes,
As fragrance from a summer rose,
What time the God of life doth choose
To let it flow;
And then we know
There is always life beneath the snow.

Then tell us not that he is dead;
For to one heart death-shorn
His love was dear as angels' bread:
God help that heart forlorn!
Sweep on, oh, sea of trouble vast—
Weep on, for hopes to ruin cast—
Reap on, O Death!—but this wild blast
Will bring sweet calm
From Mercy's palm,
And harvest-home with victory's psalm.

Raise the white blind, let in the light—
Avaunt, dull grief and care:

I hear a band of seraphs bright
 Singing in heaven's air :
 Bride of the noble dead, be wise ;
 Lift up thy sad, fond, tearful eyes ;
 Behold ! your noble Albert lies
 On His kind breast
 That loves thee best,
 And gives the troubled spirit rest.



Ernest Jones.

I MET a Truth we almost hate ;
 She told a tale 'tis pain to hear :—
 I have not felt such woe of late,
 Nor fought a sorrow more severe.
 Full twenty years are flown afar
 Since I was led to love a star—
 A lofty star, whose sudden flight
 Has 'reft my life of half its light.
 Not that my faith in God is less,
 But sudden darkness brings distress
 From which we shrink. My star of yore
 Was dreaded for the light it bore,
 Was envied for its virtues fine,
 And for its love of right Divine.
 An idol of this present age
 Was doomed to feed on dungeon air,
 Was prisoned in a felon's cage,
 When the dark angel, Death, was there !

That he might, what? There was a trust—
 That he might die ; but Death, the just,
 Gazed at oppression with disgust,
 And scorned to help the cause of Wrong,
 Although her hateful hope was strong.

* * * * *

What need we drive our feeble pen
 To tell how thought has changed since then?
 We cannot with poor praise endow
 This noble godson of a king.
 But where is venomed slander now?
 Here lies a corse she dares not sting.
 A holy bell sings sad and slow—
 I wish it were a false alarm ;
 The tree of life rocks to and fro,
 Shook by Death's awful arm !
 From that great tree the grave is fed,
 From a proud branch a bird has fled—
 A bird that warbled in its youth
 The songs of Freedom, Love, and Truth ;
 One that never was bought or sold,
 One that was never fed with gold.
 Nay, not a bird—a bard, a man,
 That sang for Progress in her van.
 He never sang to please the great,
 He did not grow by worldly gain :
 Fortunes were trod beneath his feet ;
 But when his hope was blooming sweet
 As flowers in summer's rain,
 Death smote him with his fatal dart,
 And chilled the song-spring in his heart.
 A poet's harp hangs on the bough ;
 The toiler's hope is lying low.
 Old England mourns ; and well she may,
 For all the world is poor to-day.



Richard Cobden.

HE is not dead.
Sleep holds the noble man
That fought to win a nation's bread
In Freedom's foremost van.
But all that worth reveres
Must mourn Old England's loss ;
Mourn, priest and people, prince and peers—
Weep with your Royal Rose in tears,
By the rare Albert's dross.
Mourn for a spirit flown
That fought life's battle well ;
Mourn, earth—but heaven gained its own
When RICHARD COBDEN fell.

The man whose mind
Was a bright source, from whence
Thought flung the bolts of Truth, refined
By his heart's eloquence,
Is resting in the tomb.
But his words are as a flock
Of deathless birds—and they shall roam
From mind to mind, till the blast of doom
Shall rend his native rock.
For the Press shall give them wings,
And his unsought fame shall be
More than the praise of a hundred kings
In love's grand jubilee.



Only a Baby.

'TIS only a baby, they say,
A baby with heaven-blue eyes,
That is lying dead over the way,
With death-clouded heaven-blue eyes.
Bereft of their infinite fire
For ever—from mother and sire,
Shut in by the finger of God, lack-a-day !
'Tis only a baby, they say.

'Tis only a baby, they say,
With fair hands afold on its breast,
That went off to sleep o'er the way,
With white hands afold on its breast.
Oh weep, for their clasp is undone ;
But pray for what baby has won.
No, cruel Sorrow, why, why should I pray ?
'Tis only a baby, they say.

'Tis only a baby that died,
A little red coffin of deal,
A shroud and a pall, with four maidens beside,
To bear the red coffin of deal :
Four lily-like maidens, to tread
One path to a lonely brown bed ;
A merry old sexton made, singing away—
'Tis only a baby, they say.

Ah! why has the nestling forsook,
And why did not baby come back
From that clammy cell in the worm-haunted nook—
Ah! why did not baby come back?
With mourners in garments of crape,
That wept o'er a spirit's escape
From care's dreary night to eternity's day—
'Tis only a baby, they say.

The picture is torn from its frame,
A rose-bud is shorn of its scent,
A gem is bereft of its flame,
A soul is gone up from its tent,
To dwell with the cherubs in bliss,
And sing to the angels like this :
" 'Twas Jesus that brought me up hither to play—
He loves little children, they say."

Whenever was love so unwise?
We buried a butterfly's shell;
Fair Psyche flew up to the skies,
When mother sat sobbing its knell—
A knell on the brow of a star,
While heaven from manhood so far
Was ringing with welcomes, sweet welcomes, but
then—
'Twas only a baby. Amen.





The Little One's Grave.

HOW sweet to my nature it seems,
When memory tuneth her lyre,
To wander in beautiful dreams
With thought that can never expire ;
To view the dear home I have left,
The land that was balmy with bliss,
And feel that I am not bereft
Of treasures I mournfully miss.

Ah ! now, as I muse all alone,
I have woke up the dead from their sleep ;
Bright fancy is queen on a throne
Dull reason forgetteth to keep.
And two little cherubs, I see,
Come smiling with innocent mirth ;
Oh ! they were dear sisters to me
When they were the tenants of earth.

Love laughs in their eyes, and their hair
Floats o'er them like tresses of gold ;
Their cheeks are delightfully fair,
As roses and lilies enrolled.
Their lips are the treasures of truth ;
And when their sweet voices are heard,
They murmur the sorrows of youth,
Or warble its joys like a bird.

Fly, fly to my arms, little doves ;
Come back to my bosom once more !
I clasp, I caress you, my loves,
As claspeth the miser his store.
But listen, O men, to the tale,
I will with deep sorrow impart :
Death came like the blast of a gale,
And blew them away from my heart !

Sad now to the graveyard I go ;
I weep by the brink of their couch ;
They sleep, but not ever : oh, no !
They wake at kind memory's touch.
Yet there I must leave them awhile
In the care of the Giver that gave,
But I fancy I never shall smile
When I think on the little one's grave.





Heart's Counsel.

STRIVE to live above the earth,
Be an angel's brother ;
Less than them, what art thou worth ?
Learn to leave thy mother.
Wean thy spirit from its care,
Quit it like a brave man ;
Though the world is rich and fair,
Do not be its slave, man.

Let not Mammon chain thee down
With his golden fetter ;
Earth may give her child a crown ;
Heaven's crown is better.
Never grasp the shadow, when
Substance may be had, man ;
Keep your souls above it, then,
Do not play the madman.

Man is not a wingless worm,
Nor a swordless warrior ;
He may rise above the storm ;
Crime is heaven's barrier.
Battle for thy spirit's weal ;
Be a lion's whelp, man ;
Put your shoulder to the wheel,
When you cry, God help, man.



A Psalm of Life.

O SOUL of mine, sob not so loud ;
Hast thou not wept too long ?
What though we walk beneath a cloud,
Let's break it with a song.
Though want may bare thy prison wall,
And hurl the shafts of pain,
From fate's black clouds bright flowers fall,
And 'twill not always rain.

Come, soul of mine, do thou be brave,
Shoulder thy load once more ;
Short is thy journey to the grave,
The strife will soon be o'er.
Though life's wild waves roll rough and high,
Be firm and front the blast ;
God's whirlwinds lift us to the sky,
And 'twill not always last.

Up ! soldier soul, to arms, and cope
With all thou durst not shun ;
From the cold sepulchre of hope,
Arise, and greet the sun.
The future on her dark cheek wears
A golden bar of light ;
God's angels sing on heaven's stairs,
And 'tis not always night.



A Moon-Flower.

'MID a mass of leaf and flower,
Through a beautiful festoon,
In our cosy garden bower,
I beheld the harvest moon—
Shedding grace
From above,
On the face
Of my love,
As she called me home with laughter
From the flowery realm of thought,
Where I oft
Steal away,
In the soft
Close of day;
Though the treasures we run after
Are too often dearly bought.

Shining in the sun's evangel,
Like a massive silver shield
Carried by a mighty angel
Walking through the ether-field,
In a light
Yellow robe,
Flowing bright
O'er our globe,

From the radiant wold of star-land
To the harvest fields below :
 Bonny Moon,
 Thou art fair,
 And a boon
 To my care,
Crowning autumn's golden garland
With the glory of thy glow.

What is this around my shoulder
Softly creeping, white and warm ?
Doth the moon-fire make it bolder ?
Movest thou this darling arm ?
 Naughty Moon !
 Speed away,
 'Twill be soon
 Dawn of day,
And Aurora, thy grand warden,
Coming to our harvest feast,
Will be out
 With her light,
 On thy route,
 Queen of night,
Smiling on my cottage-garden
From her palace in the east.

“ It is near the midnight noon, love,”
Said a voice that I love most ;
“ Lovest thou that lady-moon, love,
Sailing, like the great sun's ghost,
 O'er the waves
 That she sways,
And the graves
 Of our days,

Smiling in a path of duty,
 Like to heaven's midway lamp;
 Lighting home
 With its glare
 Souls that bloom
 Out of care?"
 On the brow of night, my beauty,
 That is God Almighty's stamp.



The Culprit's Plea.

CONDEMNED to death, behold I stand,
 With Horror face to face :
 My brow is stamp't with murder's brand,
 My being with disgrace.

Oh take me from this withering hell
 Of eyes that blaze with scorn ;
 Convey me to my sin-won cell,
 And leave me there forlorn.

Nay, not forlorn—I cannot be,
 Except with thought I part ;
 My thoughts are fiends that torture me,—
 Their fangs are in my heart.

Down, bolts of Fate, and strike me dead—
 I have no right to live :
 My crime is black, my hand is red,
 And man will not forgive.

O curse the day that brought the deed,
And blast the tempter dire :
That only brings me in my need
Reflection's bowl of fire.

Through the thin curtain of the past
What hideous memories stare,
And one that will for ever last—
My victim's face is there !

It points me to the gallows tree,
Where, with the fatal line,
A hangman waits to earn his fee—
His hands are red, like mine.

And red, like mine—sit down and sum
The odds between our acts ;
Let reason to the trial come,
And judge those ugly facts.

I slew my victim, moved by lust ;
He strangles his for gain ;
'Tis gain that makes his act unjust,
As murder in the main.

Will crime be less when I am laid
Beneath the prison floor ?
Will the foul flood of sin be stayed
When I can sin no more ?

Will passions cease to fan their fire ?
Will virtue more abound ?
Will evil with her slave expire ?
Or vice receive her wound ?

Is not the question tried by time ?
For what doth history plead ?
He that kills me repeats my crime,
If gain impels the deed.

I ask you not for freedom sweet ;
Grant me a captive's doom ;
Behold my loved ones at your feet,
Look at my troubled home.

Poor home ! oh life ! hark ! 'tis the bell,
Singing sad news to me :
There is a gathering in my cell
Of dismal company.

The sheriff, so genteelly bred,
To rob me of my breath ;
The press, that came to see him wed
A living man with death !

The chieftain of this horrid place,
The butcher, with his rope,
The gaoler, with his stone-hard face,
The priest, with little hope.

Now I must climb the scaffold hill ;
And must I thence be hurled
Out from the light, against my will,
Into the darker world ?

If I could climb this mount of woe,
To perish on its brow,
'Twould not be half so hard to do—
O God have mercy now !





The Loss of the "London."

SPIRIT of poesy, tell my soul,
Is this the storm-king's breath,
That frighteth away
From my battle-worn clay
The beautiful bride of death?
Hark! how the wild winds sweep the land,
And lash the angry main!
Have they not broken from God's strong hand?
Will it ever be calm again?

I have read sad news of a pilgrim ship,
And in my misery
Methought that the winds
Were a legion of fiends,
That buried her in the sea.
I strove to still the sinful thought
That stabbed me, heart and brow;
But it came to me like death—unsought;
And it sayeth that same lie now.

I have tempted sleep to my charming couch;
She woke my fancy wild:
I saw a sad sight
In the wild midnight,
And sobbed like a frightened child.

I woke to hear the storm-blast rave,
 And then I strove to pray ;
 But my thoughts were fixed on a deep-sea grave,
 In Biscay's turbulent bay !

Son of Adam, the powers of hell
 Are wroth that men should sing,
 " Hail ! Star of the East,"
 To their Saviour and Priest ;
 And they hate the Almighty King !
 Hark ! 'tis the wail of the angels lost.
 List ! 'tis the demon choir
 Raving—the rage of a horrible host
 In the lake of eternal fire !

Away by the horizon's misty verge,
 Last eve I saw them soar—
 A sorrowful crowd,
 In chariots of cloud,
 Driven from Nature's store.
 Night's frail queen fled from the monsters foul ;
 The hand of a mighty fear
 Is smiting his harp in the haunt of thy soul,
 He is howling this song in thy ear :—

THE STORM DEMON'S SONG.

FRESH from our dismal den
 Down in the nether glen,
 Roused by the mirth of men,
 Mad we have risen.
 We will avenge our fall :
 Chaos shall govern all,
 We will confusion call
 From our deep prison.

Still we God's anger brave ;
We for no pardon crave.
Mortals may mercy have—
 Have their redemption !
But we His foes are sworn ;
Though we were seraphs born,
We are of pardon shorn—
 Hell has exemption !

Where the worm never dies—
Where mercy never hies—
Where the lost spirit cries
 Madly for water—
Where, as for blood, they parch—
Death and destruction march,
Forth from its awful arch,
 Onward to slaughter.

There we a banquet make,
And from life's troubled lake
Blood-redeemed prey we take,
 As from a river.
There with wild revelry,
All through eternity,
Still we will rebels be—
 Supplicants never !

Break your black dungeon bars,
Mount in your cloudy cars,
Blot out the blazing stars,
 Pierce the rain fountains !
Beat the earth's bosom bare,
Crush all the flowers there,
Flood all the valleys fair,
 Shake the vain mountains !

Swift let us speed away
To the world's maddest bay;
There Death shall gather prey,
 There the grave hoard it;
There a great coffin floats—
Hail it with bitter notes,
Blast it with stormy throats;
 Down, Death, and board it—

Board the storm-shattered ship,
Blanch every cheek and lip;
From the mad whirlwind's grip
 Down we will drag her;
Strike her stern, waist, and bow;
Drive the proud ocean plough
Through the flood's foamy brow,
 Swift as a dagger.

Hark! how they wail and moan,
List! how they shriek and groan.
Furies! with hearts of stone,
 Will you not hear them?
Sea King of Galilee,
Man of Gethsemane,
Lord of Mount Calvary,
 Let Thy love cheer them!

Heavens! how calm they are,
Crossing Death's dreadful bar.
By love's triumphant Star
 Peace has been spoken.
Vainly the demons yell;
This doth their madness swell—
Heaven has baffled hell.
 Death's sting is broken!

Still o'er their briny shroud
 Raved the mad choral crowd,
 Till, from a sable cloud,
 Rending asunder,
 Forth, like a gory lash,
 Came the red lightning's flash,
 Drowning blasphemy's clash
 With Heaven's thunder.

Back to their home of woe
 Onward they rushing go,
 Like a defeated foe,
 Conquered and driven.
 As o'er a battle plain
 Bright flowers spring again,
 Beauty and all her train
 Burst out in Heaven !



Death's Soliloquy on the Last German War.

—

WHICH royal lover
 Of my mighty mother
 Dares wake,
 For her sake,
 The terrible love-blasting spirit of war,
 That, panting for plunder,
 Waited the thunder
 That signalled him back to this grave-laden star.

Ah! how she chuckles
 When your brave buckles
 For fight,
 Wrong or right,
 Slaughter's keen tool on his passion-thrilled frame,
 Whilst that hag Glory,
 Shouting victory!
 Leadeth them graveward in liberty's name.

I am not gladder
 When mortals grow madder
 Than brutes,
 For those fruits,
 That blossom in discord, to ripen when blood
 Rains its red showers,
 Crushing life's flowers,
 What do I need with the horrible flood?

Good kings or bad kings,
 Glad kings or mad kings,
 Tell Death,
 With your breath,
 Where will you go if you fall in the fray?
 Mind my worms regal;
 If war is legal,
 You have my father, the devil, to pay.

Rivals are praying—
 What are they saying?
 "Jesus do
 Help us to
 Torture and madden and murder our brother!"
 But I am busy now,
 Havoc is coming now,
 Hell is delighted, and so is Death's mother.



Grandfather Hoare, the Good Shoemaker.

MY hero has no land, no store,
No lofty rank, nor title fine;
Yet he is great Grandfather Hoare,
His years are seventy-nine;
And when my life was in its May
My hero was a veteran gray.
What are his deeds among the mass,
That I should cry "Behold"?
His frame is like a wall of brass,
His pluck a rock of gold.
He does not wield the sword or spear,
Nor hurl the deadly lance;
He loves a better, calmer sphere,
He knows that life to all is dear,
And scorns the phantom chance.
From morning's dawn till evening's shade
He drives his patron's polished blade;
With happy thoughts he doth discourse;
He rideth good Saint Crispin's horse;
He pegs away along his course,
And does his best with all his might
To keep his fellow-men upright.
He will their understandings mend;
By him their soles are square.

He will not make a cobbler's end,
He is a craftsman rare ;
He does not use a boaster's airs,
His wit is like his knife,
That cutteth sweet, but never tears
A comrade in the strife.
He fights in labour's rank and file,
He meets his troubles with a smile—
He beats them as they come.
In duty's narrow path he walks,
He bends his hoary brow and talks
Of being nearer home.
He climbs a mountain rough and steep,
He does not halt to wail nor weep ;
He meeteth pilgrims, worn and wan,
Retreating with the cry,
“ Back ! there's a lion in the van ;”
But he's the wonderful old man
That does not fear to die ;
Though death may shake his frame to dust,
His faith has made him wise ;
His feet are on a planet's crust,
His Head is in the skies.
His friendship might enrich a king,
The loss would make one poor :
Now where's the soul that will not sing
Well done, Grandfather Hoare ?





Stories of Labour.*

PART I.

IF all's well as hope would have it,
Said our friend Sir Abel Allen,
As he sat within his castle,
In the midst of his retainers ;
If all's well as our hearts wish it,
With our pockets and the weather ;
Bristol will be very merry,
On the nineteenth of September ;
And it will be well for labour.

Labour! labour! what is Labour?
Said a fine soft-handed dandy,
Fostered in the lap of Fortune.
And he nestled in his arm-chair,
Saying even as he did so,
Who is Labour? what is Labour?
Heaven knows I never knew him ;
But we don't mind condescending
To receive some information
Whilst we burn this bowl of bird's-eye.

Then up spoke a brawny toiler,
Saying, If you never know him,

* "Stories of Labour" appeared at the time of the Bristol Industrial Exhibition.

You will never pay your passage
From this world to its successor.
I am poor, but independent ;
You are but a pauper's brother ;
If Dame Fortune were to leave you,
You would have to do as I do—
Have to fight with Labour's mother.
Labour is a mighty giant,
Born of cruel Want, that pinches—
Often pinches—his poor children,
Till they drive her from their dwellings,
Or she drives them to the workhouse.

I will tell you of her quarrel
With the mighty giant Labour.
Oh ! it is a glorious warfare,
For the welfare of all people !
But I pray, when I have told thee,
That thou dost thy best to keep them
Fighting till he doth destroy her.

It was on a winter morning.
He was cold, and he was hungry ;
He was sitting in his cabin ;
He was crying, " What shall I do ?
There's a great wolf in my belly ;
My great arms are like the goose-skin ;
My poor toes are nipt by Jack Frost,
And the grate is cold and sparkless.
Charity, have pity on me ;
Help me, Hercules, I pray you ;
Save me from my cruel parent ;
Take me from my heartless mother."

Did the old hag hear him call her ?
Did she hear him call her cruel ?

With her fingers, long and bony,
With their talons, sharp and horny,
She began to pinch her great son—
Pinched him till he could not bear it—
Pinched him till he said, “ I hate thee,
And I will no more endure it.”

Then he rose and stamped his big foot,
Bared his brawny arms and smote her
At his feet. I saw him strike her
With the heavy sledge of Vulcan.
With St. Crispin's awl he stabbed her ;
Choked her with his pegs and rivets ;
Burnt her with the tailor's hot goose ;
Smote her with the sailor's handspike ;
Box her with the skipper's compass ;
Tar her with Jack Oakum's tar brush ;
Smut her with the sweeper's soot bag ;
Cut her with the barber's straight scythe ;
Smash her with the joiner's hammer ;
Hash her with the paver's rammer ;
Beat her with the peasant's flail, and
Punch her with his spade and mattock.
With the woodman's knife he stript her ;
With the shepherd's shears he clipt her ;
With the stoneman's tools he chipt her ;
Ript her with the hedger's bill-hook ;
With the pens of midnight toilers ;
With the type that tells my story ;
With the plough, and with the crowbar ;
With the shuttle, loom, and needle ;
With the pencil, brush, and burin ;
With the hatchet, trowel, and mallet ;
With a thousand awful weapons
Labour fought his wretched mother—

Fought her till she shouted, Parley ;
But the giant would not parley
Till he thought that she was lifeless.
Then, when the great fight was over,
Peace and Plenty came in, shouting,
" Bravo ! bravo ! well done, Labour ! "

After the great fight was over—
After cruel Want was driven
From the humble home of Labour,
He sat down with Peace and Plenty ;
But the great wolf in his belly
Would not let him rest contented.
He kept howling, Give me plenty ;
Till the giant, to appease him,
Took the dead limb of a fir tree,
Split it in full fifty splinters,
Laid them in the grate, and on them
Placed a crown of jet black diamonds
Gathered from the death-dark coal mine.

Then he lit the splintered timber,
Then he knelt down on the hearthstone,
And he blew from Nature's bellows—
Blew the breath of his existence ;
Through the gates of speech he blew it,
Till he saw a tall blaze kindled
That flew upward from its focus
Through the black throat of the chimney.

On the altar of the household—
On the gray bars of the gridiron
Labour laid a gift of plenty—
Laid his sacrifice to hunger—
Laid a tender, hard-earned beef-steak ;
Thrice he turned it o'er and over,

As he sniffed its dainty flavour,
With his double-barrelled organ.
Then he rose it from its hot bed,
And beneath the bridge of Cupid,
Where the barber reaps his harvest
When he is not dared by fashion
To destroy the works of Nature
And the ornaments of manhood.
Underneath the ruby archway
Of that bridge which spans a chasm,
With a knife and fork he thrust it,
To content the wolf of hunger
That was raving in his belly.

After this, when all was peaceful,
On a pleasant summer evening,
Labour rested in the porchway
Of his pretty rose-wreathed cottage ;
Butterflies were dancing round him,
Bees were humming in his garden,
And a robin on the housetop
Sang a love song just to cheer him ;
Then the angel Hope drew near him—
As a fairy on a moonbeam
Glideth to the dance at midnight ;
So she slid into his bosom,
And so sweetly soft and tender,
Thus she said unto his spirit :

If you wed with Perseverance,
With my blooming, bouncing sister,
'Twill be well, and you shall prosper ;
Little canst thou do without her,
Nothing can she do without thee,
Do thou twine thy arms about her,
And her charms shall shine about thee.

Let me thank thee for thy counsel,
Said the giant to the angel,
She shall surely be my helper,
She shall be my soul's companion.
And that night when nature gave him
The refreshing balm of slumber,
He laid down with Resolution
On a couch of fragrant rose-leaves,
Which the hand of Hope had gathered.
Then his heart was thrilled with courage,
Then he strove with Perseverance—
Strove with her until she bore him
A great tribe of little comforts.
Next to these she gave a brother,
But he was so small and feeble
That she did not care to show him,
So she hid him, taught by Prudence.
And where do you think she hid him?
Down as far as she could thrust him
In the Giant's hollow stocking ;
There she kept him, nursed by Prudence,
Till he grew too great to hide there ;
Then his father said unto her,
Where is Capital, my darling ?

PART II.

Proudly from his worsted cradle
Little Capital was shaken
In his mother's cotton apron,
And his father took him, saying,
" Is he not a handsome fellow ?
I will place him for improvement
In the hands of Master Gladstone.

With that monarch of financiers
He will surely thrive and flourish."

But whilst he was proudly gazing
On the fruit of Perseverance,
The bold counterfeit of Pleasure
Peeped in through the cottage window,
Saying, in a winsome manner,
"He is handsome, he is noble,
By the fruitful bride of Bacchus,
By the rich blood of his lady,
By the purple gems that cluster
All about her loving clasps,
And her em'rald jew'ls that dangle
From her gen'rous arms to bless you ;
He is charming, he is mighty,
He can make you wondrous cheerful,
He is strong enough to fetch me,
He is swift enough to catch me.
Will you come unto my bower ?
Will you send him to the vintner's ?
He shall bring the wine that sparkles
Like a sunbeam bound in crystal,
Like a prison'd flash of lightning,
Like the dust of gold and diamonds,
Like a ruby smashed to atoms.
I will come unto your cottage,
I will make you very merry ;
You shall laugh at Sorrow if you
Send young Capital to fetch me."

Then his Perseverance fainted,
Then his Resolution vanished,
Then the good dame Prudence left him,
Then he called in jovial neighbours,
And he sent for wanton Pleasure—

Sent young Capital to fetch her.
But he came not to his father,
With the syren and her nectar ;
Still they drank the wine that sparkles
Like the dazzling eyes of serpents,
And they sang the dirge of Reason,
And they danced the dance of madness,
And they blew white clouds of weed smoke,
And they played with Satan's loadstones—
With his pack of painted paper—
Till the sentry stars departed,
And the bright sun shot his arrows
Through the shutter chinks and keyhole
Of the Giant Labour's dwelling.

Let me go unto my chamber ;
Let me seek refreshing slumber,
Said the weary fool of Pleasure ;
And he staggered up the staircase
With a heavy chest of grape juice
And a weighty trunk of strong wine,
Like a porter overladen
With the baggage of wild Bacchus.
But his bed was full of briars ;
And his fitful sleep was haunted
With malignant dreams, that brought him
The grim spectre of his mother
And that yellow boy he bartered
For the counterfeit of Pleasure.

Some years after this occurrence,
When the son he sold had travelled,
For the welfare of the vintner,
From one country to another,
He returned unto his father ;

But his father did not own him,
And he would not own his father.
He was grown too proud and mighty
To acknowledge his creator ;
He had purchased all the broad lands,
All the wealth that lay beneath it,
All the forests, woods, and rivers,
All the wild deer, hares, and pheasants,
All the salmon, trout, and turtle,
All the dainties that were given
By the great and gracious Owner
Of the earth and all its fulness
To sustain the sons of Labour,
He had purchased ; but he never
Bought from God a single grass blade.

Where was Capital's creator
When his son came back unto him ?
I could weep that I must tell you
Want was holding full possession
Of his ruined, cheerless cottage ;
And a foul sloth in his garden
Slumbered on the trampled flower-bed.
On the border of the forest,
Near the foot of a tall mountain,
He was sitting in a deep ditch
With a great load on his shoulders :
He was crying, " What shall I do ?—
Son of mine, although I sold thee,
Help me from this depth of trouble."

" Ah, ah, ah ! What wilt thou give me
If I lift thee up toward me ?"
Answered Capital the haughty,
And he snapt his fingers at him—

Snapt his fingers at his father—
Saying, “ You are justly punished.
Wretch ! how dare you purchase pleasure ? ”
Then he threw him a few crumbles
From a slender store of Pity
Which he carried in his bosom—
Threw him scorn enough to choke him—
Through him chaff, and threw him insult ;
But the strangest thing he gave him,
To relieve him from his burden,
Was a pair of leaflets gathered
From the tree of Christian knowledge—
From that evergreen that blossoms
For the welfare of religion,
In the Row of Paternoster.

Then a poor afflicted parent
Spake unto his son as follows :—
When our Chatterton was asking—
Asking you for fame and honour—
Asking you to be the patron
Of his brilliant God-born genius,
You grew deaf and would not hear him.
Then your eyes by self were bandaged.
You would not discern his merits—
You were heartless, and he perished.
After death a stone was given,
Not to him, but to his mem’ry.
In this season of my sorrow
Thou dost treat me as a felon !
Let thy gifts be what I ask for.
Can I feed the wolf of hunger
With this printed sheet, that preaches
Of that love you seldom practice ?
Will this sermon on contentment

Give me flesh and bone and sinew?
If I were to eat the Bible,
With its store of love eternal,
Would it clothe my limbs with raiment?
'Tis not charity I seek for:
Give me work, that I may bravely
Win enough to buy those blessings
God hath planted in my pathway
To the workshop of Corruption!"

PART III.

"Silence! most presumptuous ingrate,"
Answer'd he to whom 't was spoken.
"Thou hast told me a fine story
Of the marv'lous boy that perish'd.
Blame me not for his misfortune.
He would never bend the hinges
Of his knees to seek my favour;
He was proud, and he is fallen,
Like the morning star from Heaven.
On this earth awhile he rested,
But he would not do me homage.
If he chose to dash his sand-glass
At my feet, and brave the future,
Doth it prove me blind or heartless?
Say, Am I my brother's keeper?
Thou hast told me a fine story.
I will treat thee with its rival:—
After Joseph's brethren sold him
To the merchants of the desert,
He became a chief in Egypt.
Then, when Famine, gaunt and bony—
When grim Want, my old grandmother,

Rested in the tents of Jacob,
They were doom'd to bend before him.
So shalt thou bow down before me."

Then replied the speaker's parent—
"Oh! my son, and must I humble?
Is it noble—is it gracious—
Is it fair, or just, or honest,
Thus to take this mean advantage
Of the poverty I suffer?
Our first parents, when in Eden,
Were by every good invited,
And from one alone forbidden.
I am dared from every dainty;
If I taste, I waste and suffer
Cold and want—your scorn and pity.
All the while thou art like Satan—
Thou dost tempt me with example.
What you wear I may not dare to—
What you eat must be my poison.
What! if Labour is a spendthrift,
Is not Capital his teacher?"

"Hold! bold beggar! or I leave thee—
Leave thee in this ditch of trouble:
Eat thy humble pie and listen.
I will give thee what thou askest—
I will find thy limbs employment—
I will lift thee up toward me;
But thou first shalt sign this compact:—
All thy flesh, blood, bone, and sinew—
All thy strength, thy skill and talent—
Half the time thy Maker gives thee,
Shall be mine, and I will feed thee;
I will build you homes to dwell in;

You shall buy, but never pay for ;
Thou shalt have all I deem proper,
Long as thou hast strength to earn it.
Then, when thou art old and useless,
After thou hast done thy duty,
I will give thee, oh ! my father,
To the keepers of the worn-out—
To the tender Poor-law Guardians !
Say ! wilt thou become my servant ?”

Then replied the swarthy giant—
Son, if I accept thy service,
Wilt thou be as He that sayeth—
Come to me all ye that labour ?
I have heard that in thy travels,
Thou hast been a hard task-master.
Who is he that stole Ham’s children
From the sun-scorched shores of Afric ?
Who is he that chained and whipt them—
Till the man who never scorned me,
Till the patron of free labour,
Till the Mississippi boatman,
Till the brave Kentucky woodman
Broke the fetters of their bondage ?
Art thou drove by competition,
To perform the deeds of meanness ?
Is not self thy ruling passion ?
’Tis not life which you compete for,
But for rank, and fame, and honour
I compete for my existence ;
I do earn the bread you pray for.
When you see my rags and tatters,
Do not pass me with reproaches ;
That has made me thy impeacher
At the judgment bar of reason.

Well I know I am not blameless ;
But, if wealth doth purchase wisdom,
How is this that with thy precept,
Thou hast taught me to be vicious ?
You assert me a great spendthrift—
Am I not your emulator ?
Who taught me the vice of smoking ?—
Fronting beauty most fastidious,
You may burn your mild Havannah.
This you are allowed by custom ;
But, if I durst imitate you,
With the clay my means afford me,
Tell me by what rule you reckon,—
Reckon me a low-bred blackguard ?
Though you play at speculation—
Though you waste the wealth I gather—
I will not ignore your virtues.
I have seen your angels toiling,
Seen them toiling for my welfare ;
I have marked their acts of mercy.
Canst thou not discern thy folly ?
I can see thy one hand weaving,—
Busy weaving nets for mischief.
Can thy other these unravel ?
Thou hast tangled good with evil.
Many are the sacred temples
Thou hast raised for holy worship ;
But I do not love your beadles,
Do detest proud Scorn, the porter.
There are crowds of ragged sinners
That would share the Gospel banquet,
If he did not dam the porchway.
If you ask how came they ragged ;
If you say 'tis their own seeking,
I shall tell you that it is not—

Tell you that you are not guiltless.
When you kneel before Jehovah,
In your fav'rite place of worship,
On your fine, soft-cushioned knee-stools,
Do you pray the prayer of Jesus?
Do you say to the great Father
Of all good from Him proceeding—
“Lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.”
If you do, I pray you tell me
Why you reared the gin fiend's palace?—
Why you built that Pandemonium,
Where a man may drink the devil
That shall triumph o'er his virtue,
That will mount the throne of reason,
That will bid him rob his children,
Till they fall or steal a live'hood,
Till they wear the rags you scorn so,
That they cannot enter God's house,
Where you sport proud fashion's feathers?
You may say they are free agents;
So was Adam ere he stumbled,
As we all are prone to stumble.
And what need you be the agent
Of the fiend that tempted Adam?
Whence arose this drinking custom?
Even in this nineteenth century,
I avow thee my preceptor.
Boast you not your well-stored cellars?
Do you often hold a banquet
Where the wine cup doth not circle?
You may quaff the rosy goblet,
You may drink the wine that sparkles
With the fire of my destruction,
But it will not singe your broadcloth.

You have plenty, you have power ;
You have credit, you may squander ;
You may sin and not be punished,
You may live a life luxurious ;
Clothed in purple and fine linen,
You may laugh at rags and tatters.
For its scales of gold and silver,
Thou hast reared the bane I foster,
Thou hast bred a hideous serpent,
That is twisted, twined, and knotted
In our anti-social system.
Let our Social Science Congress,
Let our bishops and our pastors,
Let the engines of the platform,
Let the great guns of the pulpit,
Let the press, and let all good men,
Blend their prayers and band their efforts
To annihilate this monster
That was scotched by Father Mathew.
Hast thou not that curse extended ?
O'er the deep and dark blue ocean
I have seen the white-winged wonders
Of the great Peacemaker—Commerce—
Wafted by the winds of heaven.
But what bore they in their bosoms
To the dwellings of the heathen ?
Shame is yours that I should tell you !
From the shores of Christian England,
In Britannia's bounding chariot,
Rode a minister of mercy,
And the bearer of glad tidings ;
But the ship wherein he travelled
Bore a freight of deadly poison.
Thus my dreadful plague was carried
To the wigwam of the Red-man,

To the hut of the Laplander,
To the tent of the wild Arab,
To the islands of the South Sea,
And the bungalows of India,
Till 't was spread the wide world over,
And all this for self. How fearful !
You have made my woe your profit ;
With your laws that sore oppress me,
With your sharp steel, lead, and powder,
With your steam, and with your engines,
With your whirring wheels and levers,
That should ease and be my helpers,
You, for self, have tried to keep me,—
Tried to keep me down beneath you.
But brave Patience is my virtue ;
Though I rest I am not thankful ;
I can wait a little longer,
I can see the good time coming,
I will make myself respected,
I will lift myself toward you.
Wilt thou not bend down to meet me ?
Let thy might with mine be blended ;
Let us band our pluck and powers ;
Let us be the world's advancer !
Lead me in the path of progress.
Do not make religion mournful.
Why should vice alone be charming ?
More than this, my son, I ask thee :—
Let us aid the consummation
Of that bountiful idea
Which the good Prince Albert planted,
Which our dear Victoria cherished,
Till it flourished, bright with blossom,
On the morn of that glad May-day
When our palms in peace were bonded,

For the welfare of all nations,
In our world-famed Crystal Mansion.

PART IV.

Since that nineteenth of September,
When our bannered streets were crowded
With a host of happy people ;
When the men we love to honour
Led the van of labour's army
Through the heart of this great city.

Since that proud day in September,
When we heard the blithe bells laughing,
When they shook their lofty prisons,
When they smote their ribs of silver,
When they flung rich notes of gladness
In the sea of human pleasure.

Since that bright day of September,
When the lovers of Apollo,
With loud drums and clashing cymbals,
Twisted horns and brazen trumpets,
Honied flutes and dulcet cornets,
With such pipes as Pan might covet,
Blew their notes of admiration.

Since that gay' day in September,
When a hundred pleasant voices
Sang the victory of Labour,
Seven times hath this fair planet
Risen from her starry pillow ;
Seven days, o'er earth and billow,
Hath the sun rained down his glory.
All these days my soul hath pondered
On the subject of my story ;

Seventy times my muse hath led me
From the battle-fields of Labour
To the banks of meditation :
But, so oft as I was drinking
From that well which knows no shrinking—
From the well of inspiration—
Came a venomed wasp to sting me,
Sent by cruel Care to bring me
Back from Poesy's bright bowers
To my daily field of battle,
And the workshop's busy rattle,
Where Art rears Industry's flowers.

But, last eve, my troubled spirit
Flew the bondage we inherit,—
Flew, on Fancy's happy pinion,
Far from cruel Care's dominion ;
Flew to that fine, fruitful garden
Where the poets love to wander ;
There I met great Thought, the warden,
And my spirit said unto him :

“ Grant a child of song this favour,—
Do thou let me cull a garland,
In this grand and glorious star-land,
For the brawny brow of Labour.
I have risen from a far land :
Many are the friends that task me,
Many are the tongues that ask me—
Where is he that flogs his mother,
He that beats her without mercy ;
Where is he of whom you told us,
On the nineteenth of September ?”

Then I tuned my harp and listened ;
Then I caught this gracious answer :

“ Ask you for the giant Labour ?
Tell all earthly friends that ask you,
Tell the *Press* to tell all people
He is in the Rifle Drill Hall,
He is in the warrior's college,
He is holding a grand revel
In their fair and spacious chambers,
Which his presence maketh splendid.
Art thou not his humble minstrel ?
Thou shalt tune thy harp, and welcome
Wealth and fashion, rank and beauty ;
Thou shalt welcome every comer,
As the song birds welcome summer.
With this roundelay of duty.”

Welcome friends of Peace and Progress,
Welcome friends of Art and Labour ;
As the smile of Spring is welcome
To her bursting buds and bowers,
When the brilliant rain-pearls kiss them,
And the cheerful sunbeams bless them,
You are welcome, warmly welcome,
Welcome to our Exhibition.

There is not a polished marvel,
Of all those that lend their lustre
To the diadem of Labour,
But what seems to praise its maker ;
And there glows no hard-earned trophy,
In that glowing shrine of wonders,
But it bears the stamp and token
Of man's kindred with the angels.

O Thou great and gracious Owner
Of the earth and all its fulness,
How much lower we are fallen !

Let Thy greatness make us humble,
Teach us how to thank our Teacher,
And, if it doth please Thy wisdom,
Let the brawny giant Labour
Lift us up, O God, toward Thee.



The Massacre of Cawnpore.

I HEAR a shrieking at Cawnpore,
It sweeps o'er earth and flood ;
I see the tiger of Bithoor,
His fangs are red with blood :
I feel as Britons only feel,
Soul sympathy with woe ;
Fain would I grasp the gleaming steel,
And forth to battle go.

Up, and away, let Neptune's cars,
Old England's glory, glide,
So swiftly bear the sons of Mars
Across the trackless tide.
Speed on, ye chariots of the brave,
Fulfil my heart's desire ;
Ye modern wonders, genius gave
Wide wings and souls of fire.

Avengers of my race, away !
O'er the broad ocean's path ;
Whet your good weapons for the day
Of England's heavy wrath !

Repeat the daring deeds ye've done,
 In battle fields of yore !
 For there are laurels to be won
 And gathered for Cawnpore.

Yea, there are laurels, red and wet
 With blood and tears, to win ;
 And would to God we could forget
 The savage Sepoys' sin ;
 But shall we, can we, mercy give ?
 " Nay," Justice sternly cries ;
 " He that would let a mad dog live,
 Is more unjust than wise."

Oh! that my mental eyes were dark,
 Or that my soul would stay
 Within its feeble careworn ark,
 And tune a sweeter lay ;
 But nay, for nature bids me sing :
 Adieu, my native shore !
 On thought's wild, daring, deathless wing,
 I hasten to Cawnpore.

And here I stand, a child of song,
 Beneath the Indian sun,
 Amid a gay and happy throng,
 Before their woes begun.
 I hear the sentry cry " All's well,"
 But danger lives unseen ;
 For hark! I hear a shout and yell,—
 What doth this riot mean ?

Lion of England! up! awake !
 Arise! for lo, I see
 Around thy loins a monster snake,
 And many heads hath he :

And they have eyes that burn with lust,
Have ears that love a groan,
Deceitful tongues, 'tis death to trust,
And one cold heart of stone.

Fly! run! be swift, ye feeble fair
Of England's lovely fold;
Come where a band of heroes dare,
At bay like lions bold.
(A pack of blood-hounds, mad with thirst,
And bred by treason dark.)
Come on—before the storm-clouds burst—
To hope's beleagured ark.

Now from the bugle's brazen throat,
Rang shrill and loud alarms;
And the brave few, as swift as thought,
Have grasped their shining arms:
See! there they stand, unmoved by fears,
Their number, oh! how small,
Before that mass of mutineers,
Firm as a granite wall.

How well that wall of valour stands;
Hark! how the rebels shriek,
Shout, yell, and clap their lawless hands;
And yet it doth not break.
The arm of death may scarcely shake
The brave whose lives they court;
But love may move them, for the sake
Of treasures in the fort.

What treasures does that shrine unfold,
That love should bid them run?
Is it man's godless idol, gold,
Or gems that mock the sun?

Nay, 'tis not gold, nor gems that burn ;
The wealth that glitters there
Is that which loveth in return,
For the great love they bear.

Their ark is gained—its portals close—
The dove of peace has flown ;
But from that swarm of savage foes,
Say—can they hold their own ?
The guard is set, the guns are manned,
The wolves are kept at bay ;
“ Hope ” is the talisman of the band,
Their motto, “ Watch and pray.”

Come on, ye cowards, less than men,
Ay, or the brute by far !
Come on, and storm the sacred den,
Where England's lions are !
Forward, assassins, with your knives,
Come on, ye fearful knaves ;
And purchase with your blood, the lives
Of Wheeler and his braves !

Weak are the walls that gird their cage,
And few are those within,
That day by day withstand your rage ;
Then why not come, and win ?
Why wait till death the guard relieve ?
Why from your purpose shirk ?
What victory can you achieve,
When time has done your work ?

Ah, now—what means this birth of peace.
This slumber of the storm,
Who bade the swift-winged bullet cease,
Death's errand to perform ?

Where is the thunder? gone to sleep?
Who bade the foe retreat?
Why doth the Hindoo serpent creep,
And lick the lion's feet?

Listen, he speaks—but, ah, beware!
How ye that snake believe;
For once with words that sounded fair,
His brother tempted Eve.
The golden apples on life's tree,
Which he would have you eat,
Are ripe with death and infamy,
Although they look so sweet.

THE NANA'S ADDRESS.

“ALL a man hath will he give for his life,
And in my hands a thousand lives I hold;
Therefore, I pray you, let us bury strife;
Give up your weapons—be not rashly bold—
But own me gracious, as I know you brave.

“Hear me, O Samson, for thy mighty hands,
By the fair daughters of thy race are bound,
With honour, duty, yea, and love's strong bands.
And I have spoiled thee, in thy sleep profound,
Of thy trained locks, and thou art in my net.

“Let the proud Nimrods of the glorious sea,
The noble Sahibs leave our sacred soil;
I have decoyed the dogs of war, and ye
Are safely tangled in my crushing coil;
Which will you have :—sweet liberty or death? .

“The cup of life within my hand I hold,
 Take it, ye brave, and let your loved ones drink.
 I know your angel, Hope, is dead and cold,
 And ye are mourners, standing by the brink
 Of her deep grave,—then drink, if life you love.

“Mistrust me not ; by all my gods I swear,
 And Pity bids me say I will provide
 Means of conveyance, that shall safely bear
 You far from danger o’er the golden tide
 Of yonder river, though ye are my foes.

“Choose three among your number, let them come,
 And with your weapons buy the means of flight ;
 Or else remain, and bear your bitter doom.
 Grant me your teeth, I shall not fear your bite,
 My captive lions, when I set you free.”

A drowning man will gladly catch a straw ;
 The slender staff may help a pilgrim’s feet ;
 Self, it is said, is Nature’s guardian law ;
 And life with freedom is a boon too sweet
 To be refused in the stern face of death.

Slowly, as our first parents came
 From Eden’s bowers fair,
 But, thank Thee, God, without the shame
 Of that unhappy pair,
 They left the long-defended camp,
 Their valour held in vain ;
 Their cheeks were pale, their eyes were damp ;
 They seemed a funeral train.

Yea, like a funeral train in tears,
 They walk towards their tomb ;
 With hopes and doubts and cruel fears,
 And thoughts of “ Home, sweet home.”

Half naked 'neath that tropic sky,
How wretched is their lot ;
They march along, alas ! to die,
Although they know it not.

And now a river's bank they reach,
Unruffled by a breeze ;
They pause upon its vernal beach,
It is the broad Ganges.
Avaunt, away, ye blasting fears,
That in their bosoms dwell,
For hope is smiling through their fears,
And all may yet be well.

Why should these toothless lions doubt
The crafty serpent's vow ?
'Tis kept, and they are on their route,
They see no danger now :
They reach the centre of the stream,
The snake a signal gave,
And to the skies a piercing scream
Went from the fair and brave.

Unmasked along that river's banks,
Engines of war they see,
Vomiting death to thin their ranks :
That death, how can they flee ?
In vain they shriek for help ; in vain
For mercy they implore ;
Their fragile barks are rent in twain,
And demons line the shore.

Still bursting from each murky cloud
Of sun-obscuring smoke,
On that devoted, helpless crowd,
The iron hailstorm broke.

Crash after crash fell thick and fast,
And death was busy there ;
'Twas like a hell-born thunder-blast,
Crushing a world of care.

'Tis done ;—war's iron organs cease
Playing destruction's tune ;
The waters flow along in peace,
Beneath the sun of June ;
Yet there is blood upon its breast,
Of martyrs lying dead
Below its purple-spotted crest,
Down in its slimy bed.

Weep, Britons, weep, for those that sleep ;
Weep for the spirits flown :
But I have drank of horror deep ;
My harp is not my own.
I weep for vengeance while I watch,
As hunger wails for bread ;
And would from fate the lightning snatch,
To strike the serpent dead.

Away, bright bird, of beauty rare,
Go, thou poor frightened thing,
And tell the tiger in its lair,
To crown the rajah king.
Behold, ye fiends in human shape,
That murder at his nod ;
Behold your chief, that perjured ape
Of pandemonium's god.

Saved from the carnage there were some ;
Ah, me ! 'twere better far
That all, ay, all were smitten dumb
By the fierce bolts of war.

For they were rescued from their graves
To suffer further ills ;
Saved as the cat his victim saves,
To torture ere it kills.

There stands a mother ; where's the child,
That one she loved the best—
The babe that on her bosom smiled ?
Death tore it from her breast.
Her idol sleeps beneath the flood ;
The mother's cheek of snow
Is crimsoned with the infant's blood
That slumbers down below.

A Saxon youth among the crowd
Has lost his parents dear ;
They lie beneath the silvery shroud,
And he is racked by fear.
He saw his mother grasp the bank ;
But ere she trod the shore,
A rifle rang, his lover sank :
He will not see her more.

A blue-eyed damsel of the West,
With locks of burnished gold,
Is weeping on a warrior's breast ;
But he is still and cold.
Her lips are on his marbled brow ;
Her shriek is in the air ;
Alas ! that death should break his vow,
To leave her in despair.

No ; never more !—one drop of care
The last grim anguish drew
From Nature's well, hangs frozen there
By Love's calm lake of blue.

Dead! She is dead! her soul is free;
Hast thou a tear to give?
Weep, gentle reader; weep with me;
But weep for those that live.

Weep for that helpless, hopeless throng
Of captives, doomed to die;
Mourn, for the love of life is strong,
And death is drawing nigh.
Mourn, for the pangs of life are sharp,
And bitter is their doom;
I mourn that truth should tune my harp
To sing death's harvest-home.

Bright morn is waking;
The rajah is making
A feast in the east;
A banquet for death in earth's sorrowful vale.
See you that building
The sunbeams are gilding?
'Tis there where the fair
Matrons and maidens and little ones pale
Are telling Jehovah their pitiful tale.

Crowds round their prison swarm;
Baring his eager arm,
The priest of the feast,
The treacherous Nana, humanity's blot,
From his couch risen,
To visit their prison,
Is heard giving word,
Instructing his minions to take from that lot
Five whelps of the lion, that they may be shot.

They come forth undaunted ;
Mark how they are taunted
With jeers and loud sneers
By legions of merciless, murderous knaves.
They kneel for repentance ;
And though no death sentence
Was read, yet the thread
Of their lives was cut off ; but they met it like braves,
For they were five sons of the Queen of the Waves.

Still victims are plenty.
One hundred and twenty
Remain in their pain :
Remain till this planet, suspended in space,
As if with shame burning,
From Phœbus was turning,
To hide, in the wide
Spreading mantle of darkness, her guilt and disgrace,
And wash with night's dew-drops her gore-clotted face.

But yet not half gory,
The soul-crushing story,
I weave, of that eve,
When men became furies ; and they at Cawnpore,
Were toiling for slaughter,
Till blood ran like water,
Knee deep, from a heap
Of the dying and dead, on the charnel-house floor,
Has yet to be told ; for the feast is not o'er.

Say, where is death straying,
On life ever preying ?
He's come with the scum ;
With the rabble of crime he is come, with a yell come,

The terror of mortals ;
 And Golgotha's portals,
 Unbarred by the guard, [come ;
 Admit his grim butchers, no worse could from hell
 He's come to the carnage. Ah, me ! is he welcome ?

Britons, behold that fair and gentle maid,
 That lovely daughter of a fallen chief.
 See how she trembles, feeble and afraid,
 In the mad tempest, like an aspen leaf ;
 Her hands upraised in agony's firm clasp ;
 Her snowy cheeks, bedewed with sorrow's flood ;
 Her soft locks tangled in a villain's grasp,
 Whose ruthless fingers drop with woman's blood.

Look at that mother ; mark her anguish wild.
 See, from her arms the sepoy tears her child ;
 He rends its fair white limbs, with savage peals
 Of hideous laughter : view her as she kneels
 Beside her husband's corse, on the red floor,
 In his warm gore. Hear her blanched lips implore

God's mercy, death, or vengeance,—till the knife
 Is deep again in the rich spring of life ;
 And one more numbered with a hapless lot,
 Of whom we say, " They were, but they are not."—
 And one more spirit of my horrid dream
 Drifted away on the fast ebbing stream,
 Toward a shore no mortal foot has trod,
 Far from Cawnpore, up to the throne of God.

And shall I follow in its rapid flight,
 That swift-winged spirit ? Durst my feeble sight
 Pierce the vast realm between the vale of tears
 And love's abode ? May my quick listening ears
 Catch her sad story at the judgment-bar,

If I do venture to some half-way star ?
It may not be ; for I have drained the bowl
Of bitter thought to torture my sad soul.
Hush, then, my muse, and let the curtain fall ;
My heart is bleeding—I can gaze no more—
Wild tumult reigns, the fiends are drunk with gore.
Now for revenge—I'll the sweet demon wake,
And hail the lion that shall crush the snake !

On, Havelock ! on, thou brightest star
Of that illustrious throng,
Whose virtues dazzle from afar,
Whose glory fires my song.
On, as a life-boat, o'er the wave,
Beneath a stormy sky ;
On, to the rescue of the brave,
And save them, ere they die.

Too late, alas ! too late they come,
To save the brave and fair ;
They view with rage and horror dumb,
A scene of havoc there.
They clench their teeth, and with their feet,
Down on the crimsoned earth,
They stamp this truth,—“ Revenge is sweet,
When murder gives it birth.”

Gaze on, gaze on, round that dread well,
And weep, if ye have time,
Before your rifles ring the knell
Of spirits steeped in crime.
What though a troop of furies black
Around the serpent stand ;
Havelock, the brave, is on his track,
With his avenging band.

They meet, they fight, and myriads run
Before that gallant few ;
Ah ! now grim vengeance has begun,
And crime shall have its due.
Yet there are those for whom we weep,
Warriors, alas ! no more ;
But they in beds of glory sleep,
The avengers of Cawnpore.

Tell me, ye veterans, stern and grim,
Who is yon trembling knave ?
Ah ! he is one whose hopes are dim,
And dismal as the grave :
To his appeal our hearts are mute,—
Behold his victims poor ;
He is that cold, red-handed brute,
The butcher of Cawnpore.

Down on thy knees, thou wretched tool
Of a foul monster's will ;
Do penance in that scarlet pool
Which thou didst help to spill.
Wet, villain, in that precious stream
Those lips that pardon cry ;
Nor of one drop of mercy dream :
For thou shalt surely die.

Hard by yon road, that self-same day,
High on a tree, there hung
A lifeless form of loathsome clay
As ever gallows swung :
A wretch for whom no tear-drop fell
From pity's balmy store ;
Because we thought on death's dark well,
And murder at Cawnpore.

SONG STREAMS

BY

J. GREGORY,

AUTHOR OF "IDYLS OF LABOUR," ETC.



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TO MANY KIND HELPERS
OF MY MUSE,
FROM THE OBSCURITY OF LIFE,
I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME,
WITH
PLEASANT MEMORIES,
AND
MUCH LOVE.

J. GREGORY.

PREFACE.

COURTEOUS READER, by the dim light of a few bottled glowworms I once saw a countryman reading the Bible. This anecdote I pen that you may comprehend the extreme difficulty a toil drudge has to overcome ere he accomplishes the feat of launching into the flood of literature such a volume as this.

Hope not then to find within the compass of my waif-fold the wonders of poesy. Yet here shall you discover flowers you will not disdain, and among the leaves thoughts that shall not be forgotten.

Out on the sea of time I have floated my waifs away as urchins sail paper boats. Here have I again gathered them in; and unto the grace of your indulgence, that they may not with the author soon pass down to greater obscurity, I respectfully commend them.

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W A I F S .

Summer Clouds.

THROUGH my prison windows gazing
On the blue midsummer sky,
And the splendour, soul-amazing,
Of the vapours passing by,
I behold a panorama,
Motioned by the zephyr's breath,
Passing westwards, 'neath the heavens,
To the kingdom claimed by death ;

Drifting wrecks of Eldorado,
Bearded bards, with broken lyres ;
Temple, palace, and pagoda,
Turrets, pinnacles, and spires ;
Chariots drawn by prancing dragons,
Mounted knights, and castles grand,
Built on blocks of alabaster,
Floating o'er my mother-land.

Clouds of every form and tissue,
Coral tinted caves, from whence

Light-robed phantoms rise and issue
 To the realms of space immense;
 Magazines of summer thunder,
 And a host of shapes uncouth,
 With the Storm-king's black battalion,
 Marshalled in the misty south.

Headland, peak, and promontory;
 Heaven-piercing hills of snow,
 Varnished with a flash of glory,
 Or the sun's seraphic glow;
 And the fair earth far beneath it,
 By the heirs of Eden trod,
 Lying like a massive emerald,
 Shining in the palm of God.

Fleecy clouds like cherubs' pillows,
 Soft as beauty's silken curl,
 Bays of violet with billows,
 Climbing rocks of argent pearl;
 And the mighty dead of ages—
 Monarchs, prophets, saints, and seers—
 Marching in a vast procession
 To a sepulchre of years.

Symbols of all things uncertain,
 Visions of the empires dead,
 Painted on a splendid curtain,
 Fringed with silver, blue, and red:

Pictures sad and pictures pleasant,
 Framed in purple, gold, and dun,
 Hung on the blue wall of heaven
 By the palace of the sun.

Winds of summer, while ye wander,
 All the world of glory through,
 Tell us what is this new wonder,
 Gliding in my vision new?
 It is like a grand cathedral,
 But my fancy seeth more,
 She can count the twelve apostles
 Grouped about its lofty door.

Do they listen to a pæan
 From Old England's Sabbath bells,
 To the merciful Judean,
 And the tale of love it tells?
 Can the bell notes ever wander,
 Wander up and not expire,
 Till they reach the heavenly highlands
 Through this sea of summer fire?

There is one day out of seven,
 When a weary child I seem,
 Sleeping on the stairs of heaven,
 And it may be all a dream;
 But I see the summer angels
 Bearing banners wide and white,

Waving in the summer sunshine
 To the world a sweet good night.

All our lives are drifting tombward,
 While I watch the pageant fair,
 "Sheeted shadows" wander homeward
 Through the scented summer air;
 And the land is green with beauty,
 But my charm is on the skies,
 When the June rose falls to slumber,
 And the Sabbath evening dies.

Faithful hopes of flying treasures,
 Emblems of the hopes we had,
 Evanescent as our pleasures,
 Visions, beautiful and glad,
 Of the future float above me,
 But my joys are in their shrouds,
 While I learn this painful lesson
 From the painted summer clouds.

What is honour, if we gain it,
 But a goblet dashed by fate
 From the lips of those that drain it,
 Or a guest that comes too late?
While we wait the banquet endeth,
While we hope the cloud expands,
While we work some needy brother
 Weaves our shroud with weary hands.

Winter Rain.

AS a bird bereft of feather, or a harp devoid of string,

In this wild, wet, winter weather, I can neither soar nor sing ;

I can only sit and listen to the soul-disturbing strain
Of the hissing, seething, leaping, labour-killing
winter rain.

It is neither light nor darkness ; it is neither day nor night ;

It is gloom in all its starkness ; it is water in the
might.

Shape and mood

Of a flood,

That the winds, a busy brood,

For the love of ruin striving, are all up, and madly driving

World-ward from the bursting fountains.

Whence it breaks

On the peaks

Of the black and jagged mountains,

Where the frightened eagle shrieks

To the blind

Whirling wind,

That has not a home to gain,

Nor a grave wherein to moulder

When it dies.

That is why Boreas tries
 To uproot the bedded boulder
 From the stony giant's shoulder—
 He would hurl it on the valley,
 He would dash it on the plain,
 Where the water spirits rally
 All their might continually,
 And the rain—
 “ Winter rain ”—
 On the rolling river dances,
 Like a sea of silver lances,
 To the stormy utterances
 Of the wind that has no pity—
 How it beats
 On the streets
 Of the smoke-enveloped city,
 Where the people that you meet
 Are a race with “ flying feet ”
 Seeking shelter,
 Helter skelter,
 From the flood wherein they welter,
 To the sad sonorous chorus
 Of the turbulent, uproarious,
 Winter winds, that wander howling,
 To the heavens black and scowling,
 Like a herd of lions growling
 In a melancholy strain,
 To the trilling
 Of the chilling,
 Labour killing “ winter rain.”

In my cottage chamber sitting, on its roof I hear
the rain,

Dash'd from heaven like the splitting of a planet's
pall in twain,

By the bluff,

Burly, gruff,

Ghostly, gusty, sharp, and rough,

Forest sacking,

Ocean racking,

Winds that wander mercy lacking,

With no home on earth to gain.

What with me,

Can the three

Winds, that are a trinity,

Want so badly,

That they madly

Wail about my bolted door

In the flood descending sadly

From the sea that has no shore?

How they mob me,

Rack and rob me;

Will they never more refrain?

By the soul of my dead mother!

'Tis no other

Than the winds that drown'd my brother

In the mad Atlantic main.

'Tis a crowd of things immortal,

Void of body, shape, or form,

'Tis the spirit of the storm;

Wailing round my bolted portal,

In the rain—

“ Winter rain.”

What with me can they want hither?

How they murmur and complain!

Till my death-sick fancies shiver

As the thought

Flits before my soul, unsought,

That my brother dead may be

Here with me;

From his grave beneath the free,

Greedy sea,

Where the savage natives wrangle,

For the flesh and blood they mangle,

And the clammy rock-weeds tangle,

Round their white limbs noiselessly.

Is it he?

Hear I not strange footsteps walking

On my haunted chamber floor?

Lord! how loud my fears are talking

In this horrible uproar

Of the rain—

Wind and rain—

That enthrals me in the chain

Of a spell wherein I ponder,

Sick with wonder,

At a tragic scene out yonder,

On the mad Atlantic main,

Where the winds, that shift and huffe

On the flood they lift and ruffle,

With the white-maned monsters scuffle ;
 Ah ! the prize they hope to gain
 Is a ship,
 That they strip,
 Torture, toss, and overtip,
 Till the water-witches clasp her
 In a shroud of boiling jasper,
 And she disappears for ever, in the reservoir of rain.
 Now the widow's eyes are raining
 On the shore,
 Now her children are complaining,
 Sorrow sore ;
 But *the merchant trader, gaining*
 By the loss that made them poor,
 Hears the flighty,
 Wild, and mighty
 Winter rain he "wishes further,"
 Saying sounds that seem like murder.
 And what more ?
 Hears a master spirit seeking
 No man's honour, praise or fame,
 Hears the noble Plimsoll speaking
 Trumpet-tongued, in mercy's name,
 Pleasure fright'ning,
 Anger brightning [uing
 Truths, that burn their paths like light-
 To the core
 Of the trader's heart, that trembles
 As his palsied fear assembles

All his memories terrific, that he fancied dead before
 Dares the *traitor* do as Judas did of yore,
 When he dashed a damning token
 Of a greedy spirit broken,
 At the feet of bearded rabbis on King David's
 temple floor,

 With the moan
 And the groan
Of a soul by God forsaken?
 Oh! the pain
 Of the rain,
 And the troubles that awaken
 To my spirit, sorrow shaken,
 How it strives
 As it drives

 Comfort from a host of lives.

Now the toiler in the cottage, that hath life and
 body sold
 For a doubtful mess of pottage to the god whose
 name is gold,
 For his famished lovers caring with his rain be-
 clouded eyes,
 Through the window looks despairing on the black
 unbroken skies.
 Deeper, wider, passion furious, fetter bursting,
 freedom fond,
 Dashing, with a joy luxurious, down their banks
 and miles beyond,

Torrents leap,
 Bound and sweep,
 While the toiler's children weep—
 Breadless, wretched, wan, and ghastly,
 Famine-pinched and sinking fastly—
 Helpless, idle-handed, starving, God have mercy on
 the poor—
 When the winter rain is on them, then the wolf is
 at the door.

The Resurrection of Flora.

ALL summer-ward flowing,
 The spring days are growing :
 Aloud March is blowing his trumpet profound,
 Because 'tis his duty
 To waken up beauty,
 And summon the dead from their graves in the
 ground.

Swift sunbeams are streaming,
 On primroses beaming,
 Where wood-doves sit dreaming in wind-shelter'd
 dells,
 And bird music gushes
 From fresh-budding bushes
 To violets smiling in moss-matted cells.

The ice-king is dying,
 The frost fiends are flying
 From spring, hither hieing o'er mountain and plain ;
 See! where they have striven
 A snow robe lies riven,
 The spear of the crocus hath pierc'd it in twain.

Away from Death's keeping
 Fair things that were sleeping
 Come timidly peeping—awoke by the blast
 Of March, the spring angel,
 In summer's evangel,
 Proclaiming to Flora that winter is past.

Where all things seemed blighted,
 Dear daisies are sighted,
 And lambs leap delighted to see them spring up ;
 No king in his palace
 Lifts such a fair chalice
 As my fairy goblet, the bright buttercup.

The dead are ascending,
 From sepulchres rending—
 Their death night is ending, their rising is grand ;
 Their freedom is spoken,
 Their bondage is broken,
 The spirit of life is abroad in the land.

Behold them assembling,
 All tenderly trembling—

That future resembling, of which we have fear,
 When life shall be given
 To spirits sin-shriven,
 And they shall be lifted to heaven's high sphere.

I love for their daring,
 Beyond all comparing,
 My March flowers bearing a message of love :
 From them we can borrow
 This solace in sorrow—
 Like them we may blossom all trouble above.

Through darkness uptoiling,
 All troubles outfoiling,
 No neighbour despoiling to be what they are ;
 They blow on our mountains,
 They glow by our fountains,
 And sparkle like gems on the brow of a star.

All summer-ward flowing,
 While spring days are growing,
 And March is here blowing his trumpet profound ;
 With them we are going
 From all we are doing—
 Like them may we rise from our beds in the ground.



Easter Dreams.

WHEN to the playground of the lamb,
 Over the lea from dainty cells,
 The belted, bronzy, brown bees swam
 To kiss the golden cowslip bells,
 And more than this,
 In the delightful Easter hours
 When Psyche from her prison foul,
 In search of bliss,
 Sprang out to life a wingèd soul,
 I nestled on a bank of flowers,
 Breathing the breath
 Of blossoms bright,
 That were from death
 To life and light.
 Woke by the children of the sun,
 Which ye call beams,
 Who do the Poets' banquet shun,
 Or fail to feast your souls on dreams,
 And from my bed of green and gold
 Beneath the boughs, above the mould,
 I saw in the blue wold aloft
 A fleecy, fair, fantastic, soft
 Slow-sailing swarm of silver white
 Summery clouds, that in my sight
 Swam as a vessel on the deep
 Swims when the saucy sea winds sleep,

And Fancy of the clouds above,
Sang thus to please my happy love.

After the days of mighty March,
The burly trumpeter of Spring,
Are numbered 'neath the world's blue arch,
When orchard trees are blossoming.
It is a joy the Father grants
Unto the blest inhabitants
Of that high home all else above,
Where all the people live on love,
That they may quit their blissful spheres;
To live and smile
A happy while
On this wild wilderness of tears,
Which is the star God loveth most,
Of all the great harmonious host.
And a death-haunted orb from whence
Christ, for the love of Adam's race,
Arose to the magnificence
Of endless life, from Death's embrace.

Therefore the pilgrim angels leave
That bliss, for which we fret and grieve,
In happy crowds
And fleecy clouds,
Sailing above this world so far,
Are unto them as ships afloat
In the blue sea about a star,
Or each of them a pleasure boat,

Wherein the pilgrim angels glide
From heaven in the Easter-tide.

Hark! o'er the land

A joyful band

Of minstrel birds on blissful wings,

Ascend to meet

The angel fleet ;

All the green wood with music rings ;

And spirits sweet,

From blossoms fair

Arise to greet,

On wings of air,

Them to this world that we call ours :

Hence they are wafted by the breath

Of wonders from the house of death

Called April flow'rs ;

For all these pilgrim ships that glide

Along the blue

Bright heaven in the Easter-tide

Are made of dew—

The dainty dew of herbs and flowers,

Which, in the holy Easter-hours

Fell on them in the starlight mild,

As tears upon a sleeping child

Fall from the milder orbs of love,

Bending its virgin babe above.

And there are clouds of which we know

They were not from the seas below,

Nor from the rolling river's breast

Raised to such peaceful states of rest.

There is among
 That snowy throng
 Of sunny clouds that swim and shine
 Up in the bright
 Blue sea of light,
 A floating fount of love divine,
 Made of that passion-tide which swept
 From mercy's heart when Jesus wept ;
 And when the pilgrim angels glide
 From heaven in the Easter-tide ;
 'Tis from that fount, the world above,
 They drink his tears, and say, " What love ! "

Thus to the muse that I love best
 Fair fancy sang at love's request,
 And even as I heard her sing
 Her happy theme—
 Was it a dream ?

I saw the heavens opening ;
 Not with the sound of sudden haste,
 But as a languid lily's mouth
 Opens at noon to catch the chaste
 Kiss of an air wave from the south ;
 So softly opening more and more,
 Up in the skies,
 Until mine eyes
 Seem'd looking in through heaven's door,
 And through that door an angel throng,
 With tender sounds of holy song,

Came ; and before the angels flew
 Down to our planet's beach of blue,
 A flock of doves, and by that beach,
 Within the pilgrim angels' reach,

So light afloat

A cloud of dew,

Shaped as a boat,

Swam in my view.

And then—and then, that fairer boat,
 Than ever fancy found afloat,
 Drawn by a flock of doves along,
 Came sailing with the angel throng;
 Nearer, and nearer yet, until,
 High on a heaven-piercing hill,

Out in the west,

I saw it rest,

And from its bounds the happy band
 Leapt light as snow flakes on the land.
 Then from the earth beneath their feet
 Brake a bright host of blossoms sweet,
 Such as were never brought by spring,
 Save to a soul's imagining ;
 So I believe that they were brought
 From heaven by the happy thought,
 For mine were as that blissful throng
 Of doves that drew the boat along ;
 And if thine inner eyes are good,
 When that thy mind is in the mood,

And if on such a bank of flowers,
 You nestle in the Easter hours,
 More than I saw you may behold,
 And sweeter may your dreams be told ;
 Mine is a little earth child's lay
 With whom 'twill pass away.



The Storm.

THE winds are up, the clouds are down
 About the mountain's waist,
 The sky is black as murder's frown,
 And wild as anger's haste.
 Death rides the blast that flings the spray
 High as a forest tree
 Over the doom'd ship in the bay,
 And tumult shakes the sea.

Hark! how the gusty monsters roar,
 The stoutest vessel's form
 Shakes as a reed on Albion's shore
 In this tremendous storm.
 God or Britannia? which is now
 Chief Ruler of the waves?
 To whom do the tall breakers bow
 Above our sailors' graves?

Come down to the rock-belted beach,
 And the wild ocean's rim ;
 There you shall hear the sea-gull screech,
 To see the lifeboat swim :
 Lord ! how she leaps from wave to wave
 Toward the sinking bark ;
 It is a chariot of the brave,
 And the sea lions' ark.

See, how they bend the ashen blades
 To climb the seething wall ;
 Now bulwark deep she bravely wades
 The flood at duty's call.
 She cleaves the breaker's crest in twain,
 And, like a thing of life,
 She revels in the stormy main,
 And glories in the strife.

What pale spectator of the fight
 In this wild midnight noon
 Is this, that trembles with affright ?
 'Tis the fair Lady Moon.
 The pall of clouds is rent to rags,
 And shatter'd fragments fly
 Before the blast like hunted stags,
 Or aught that fears to die.

God speed the lifeboat to and fro,
 And hear us while we plead—

It is a fearful task we know
 To dare the noble deed.
 Oh, which will win, the wind or flood?
 There will be calm,—but then,
 This is the fear that chills our blood—
 The stakes are living men.

Weird voices haunt the troubled air—
 Hush! there it is again;
 I wish mad Fancy would not swear,
 'Tis like the soul of Cain
 Wailing for shelter from the fiends
 That mob it by my door;
 I pray that it may be the winds—
 The winds, and nothing more.

Just where the robin loves to sing,
 Atop my chimney gray,
 There is some horrid howling thing
 That will not go away.
 A violent hand my window shakes,
 I wonder why 'tis so;
 There may be peace when morn awakes—
 But what a night for woe!

Brides of the bold that plough the deep
 For glory, love, or hire,
 With you we will this vigil keep,
 Till all your hopes expire.

The storm that blew your joy away
 Our pity woke to life ;
 'Tis hard to keep despair at bay—
 God help the sailor's wife.

She wanders in her chamber's girth,
 The sport of horror foul ;
 Love tells her of a brave man's worth,
 Fear whispers to her soul :
 The blast that shakes your cottage door
 Blew from his graveyard wide :
 Woman, you will not see him more—
 God help that sailor's bride.

She bends, she kneels, she tries to pray,
 But 'tis so wild and dark ;
 Distracted love may lose its way,
 And prayer might miss its mark.
 Her fancies are a raven flock,
 Her faith a wounded dove,
 Down by the beach, on a bare rock—
 God bless that woman's love.



To Winter.

A VAUNT! Away, thou gloomy ghoul,
 Exalt thy shadows from my soul ;

And from the sky its grimy shroud,
 Or give me strength to burst this cloud
 Of dense depression, foul, and vast,
 Wherein my wings are tangled fast,
 So that I cannot soar to sing ;
 Avaunt, that I may welcome spring.

Up! and shake off thy dusky guise,
 Awake the airs which clear the skies,
 That I may see the winter stars ;
 This is the time when gallant Mars
 And belted Saturn dance above
 Our world with Venus, Queen of Love,
 And silv'ry beams of glory flow
 From fair Diana's graceful bow.

Come in thy better raiment clad,
 Bring rosy health to make us glad,
 Let the dry sands of Afric drain
 Deep, as it loves, thy gushing rain,
 From fountain clouds that never tire.
 Then will I hail thee, glorious sire
 Of gentle Spring, thy Master gave
 To roll the stone from Flora's grave.

It is not day, it is not night,
 When shall I see the angel Light
 In the blue heavens, lifting high
 His splendid torch? Avaunt! and die,

Or speed thy change, for with thy gloom
 Thus, thou hast made this world a tomb,
 Wherein some sickly sunbeams stray
 To tell us when it should be day.



In the Garden.

IT is the hour we used to meet
 When thou wast in thy prime,
 So we for love will make a fete,
 In mem'ry of the time—
 In mem'ry of the time we met,
 When first I came to woo, Nan ;
 And just that we may not forget,
 I'll tell thee what to do, Nan.

The king of day out in the west,
 Wrapt in his golden gown,
 Sinks on his crimson couch to rest,
 So drop your knitting down ;
 And let us in the garden spread
 Our supper on the mould, Nan,
 Then will we dream of bliss ahead,
 Just as we did of old, Nan.

Down where the tall sunflow'rs flare
 Their blossoms to the bees,

There we will turn our backs on care,
And give the hours to ease ;
My arm about thy waist shall creep,
Just as it did of yore, Nan,
When all the wealth I longed to keep
Lay clasped within its store, Nan.

There! it was just like this we sat,
Down in our wooing days ;
And then you gave my cheeks a pat,
Because I sang your praise ;
And then I saw your blushes flower
In all their pretty prime, Nan,
Ah! that was young Love's sowing hour,
But now's the harvest time, Nan.

Bring out the Holy Book, good dame,
Ere doth the day expire,
And read a chapter by the flame
Of God the Father's fire ;
And then let all the children sing
Their evening hymn aloud, Nan ;
There may be angels listening,
By yonder shining cloud, Nan.

Look at our bouncing bairns, my lass,
Are they not joys of ours,
Skipping about the garden grass,
Breathing the breath of flowers ?

Now give them each a kiss for me,
 Unto the little last, Nan ;
 And I will do the same to thee,
 In mem'ry of the past, Nan ;
 The past, Nan—
 Thou wast, Nan,
 A wit more fond of Love's salute
 When wooing in the past, Nan.

Leah.

SHE walks the earth with such a grace,
 As grief alone can wear ;
 And when I meet her face to face,
 'Tis more than love can bear
 To see the seal of sorrow set
 On all that once was fair.

The glee is gone from her blue eye,
 And from her life the light ;
 Where the sea-wind wails wander_by,
 She starteth with affright,
 As if she heard a sad man's voice,
 Saying, " My love, good-night ! "

And this was how it came to be ;
 (I know her sorrow well)

There was a cot from trouble free,
Down in a sea-land dell,
Where loving Leah's laughter rang,
Blithe as a bridal bell.

I loved her with a brother's love,
I loved her as a man,
My love was as a mother's love,
So pure for her it ran ;
And that is why I mourn to see
That wreck of beauty wan.

There came a warrior of the wave
My love and hers between,
He was so gallant, good, and brave,
And wore a noble mien ;
'Tis more than half a sin to say
I wish it had not been.

She gave her life to John the Bold,
And well she keeps her vow ;
His love was worth a mint of gold ;
Where doth he linger now ?
The curlew cries his grave above,
And mournful breakers bow.

I wish sad Leah would not stray
Down where the sea weeds grow,
Watching strange vessels in the bay,
That wander to and fro ;

Sure John the Bold would never stay,
 If death would let him go !

Down to the beach, one stormy night,
 She hastened from her bed ;
 Her cheeks were of a ghostly white,
 Her lips were like the dead,
 And burning tears fell from her eyes,
 As drops of molten lead.

The winter winds like demons glad
 Did rave, and bark, and yell ;
 Crash on the coast the breakers mad
 In dreadful fury fell ;
 The stars were in a pall of cloud,
 Black as the roof of hell.

Along the beach the life-boat men,
 Smitten with terror sore,
 Beheld a woman's shape ; and then,
 Above the tempest roar,
 Three times they heard her shriek aloud
 "John Hore ! John Hore ! John Hore !

You said that you would come to me,
 And yet thou art not here ;
 I lift my hands in vain to thee,
 I cry ; thou dost not hear ;
 Come home, come home, come home ; O God !
 My soul is sick with fear.

Hence from my bed, at Love's command,
 I came the watch to keep ;
 If thou art in death's icy band,
 Why should I live to weep ?
 O God ! and I am on the land,
 But thou art in the deep."

That thought was as an arrow shot,
 Deep in her troubled breast :
 They led her to her sea-land cot ;
 They laid her down to rest :
 Never a cottage in the land
 Contains a sadder guest.

She plies her needle with a sigh,
 And then she tries to sing ;
 But when her mem'ries wander by
 It is a painful thing
 To see the pent-up torrent gush
 From misery's bitter spring.

Memories that wake at Love's commands,
 To walk with muffled feet ;
 They carry tablets in their hands ;
 They wear a winding sheet ;
 And chant the praises of the past,
 When life was nectar sweet.

I often say within my heart,
 How sweet her grief must be !

She will not spare one little part
 Of her full cup to me ;
 I wish she would not bar me from
 Her soul's Gethsemane.

Grief is a flower that loves the shade
 Where joy can never grow ;
 And there's a night by sorrow made,
 That may no morning know ;
 But night is when the spirit stars
 Put on their golden glow.

So shines her love-star clear and strong,
 Although my grief may say
 " Alas ; 'twill not be shining long
 Within its shrine of clay ;
 Hush, when the sun burns through the cloud
 I know it will be day."

Bright through the snow the crocus breaks,
 The primrose from its urn
 Wakes with a smile ; but to her cheeks
 The rose will not return ;
 'Twas John the Bold that stole the rose,
 Poor Leah lives to mourn.



Jack's Surprise.

OVER the silver sea afar,
 Over the silver sea,
 What joy hast thou brought for me, Jack Tar?
 What joy hast thou brought for me?
 'Tis nearly a year you sailed away,
 Over the bar and out of the bay;
 There's never an hour of every day,
 But what I have prayed for thee.

What would you have me bring you, Poll?
 What would you have me bring?
 A silken gown? a monkey droll?
 Or a golden bird to sing?
 What was it I promised of all things fine—
 Parrots? or pearls? or rings to shine?
 What was it I promised if you'd be mine,
 From over the sea to bring?

“You promised that if I kept my vow
 A gift you'd bring to me?”
 “Come hither, my lass, and take it now;
 'Tis here in my mouth,” quoth he.
 “There; that same kiss I carried away,
 Over the bar and out of the bay;
 I give it back to thee to-day
 Sweet as you gave it me?”

The Northfleet.

SO near the shore that she no more may gain,
 Our pilgrim ship at anchor in the night
 Lay trusting to her deep sea cable's strain,
 Full manned and ready for her ocean flight.

And as a flock of wild sea swans at rest,
 Swam wingèd rovers of the distant seas
 Around her on the liquid monster's breast,
 With pinions folded to the adverse breeze.

"The watch was set," and bright each beacon lamp,
 Tinging the robe of night with mellow sheen,
 In the black wold above our ocean camp
 Shone as a fun'ral torch in hands unseen.

Hushed were the voices of the pilgrim host,
 In the great gloomy hold clasped by the sea,
 That hurled its breakers on the Kentish coast
 With a strange, wild, sleep-scaring monody.

Swift as the snow-clouds sailing o'er the skies,
 And bearing down to where the Northfleet lay,
 A demon of the flood with gleaming eyes
 Came on her course o'er the wind-troubled bay,

Straight as the dart of death; on through the gloom
 Dashed the sea-demon on our pilgrim ship,
 That trembled, shook, and hastened to her doom,
 Crashed as an egg-shell in a giant's grip.

In leapt the green waves through her shattered frame,
 Drinking the pilgrims' lives, but the foul foe
 Stole from the death scene, and a deed of shame
 To friendly darkness, reckless of our woe.

Braves to the pumps, and heroes to the leak,
 Sprang for the love of life, and fought the flood
 The feeble shrank from, with a thrilling shriek
 For help and mercy, in their wildest mood ;

Till the sad captain gave his weeping wife
 To the bold boatswain on his shoreward route ;
 Then from our helpless exodus of life,
 And every heart, the Angel Hope went out.

Yet every chance of life was madly sought
 By the convulsive clutchings of despair ;
 There was a rush of frenzied crowds that fought
 For boats entangled in the doomed ship's gear.

There were strong men that mute as statue stones
 Of milk-white marble crouched on their own tomb ;
 There was confusion, and heart bursting groans,
 Farewell embraces, and vain thoughts of home.

And skyward darting, signals of distress
 In quick succession from the sinking ship
 Shot o'er the troubled bay of Dungeness,
 Sharp as a death-scream from a mortal's lip.

Oh! wandering pilot, answering to the sign,
 That o'er the billows drove thy conquering steed,
 I wish, good master, that the joy was mine
 Of thy life-saving in the dreadful need.

Brave was the skipper, and his noble crew
 Obedient to the end, well winning praise
 Out of the horror that around them grew,
 In the sad ending of their dang'rous days.

But brave in vain, when the great climbing wave
 Over the bulwarks came on board too fast,
 Folding three hundred victims in one grave,
 And wrangling for sad clusters on the mast.

Then the great coffin, with its living load,
 Plunged as a diver to its ocean bed;
 The Northfleet lies at anchor on the road,
 Britannia mourns for her three hundred dead.

Frolicksome Fan.

“ **W**HITHER away,
 Fanny, my fay,

Bright as a beam of this sunny spring day ? ”

Spake a fond mother, and frolicksome Fan,

Under the blossoming apple-trees ran,

Singing " Sweet mother, I speed for a run
Over the meadow-land under the sun."

Down by the stile
Whist'ling the while,
Who is it waits for a merry maid's smile?
Fanny and I when the daisies were out,
Went with the butterflies dancing about—
Dancing about in the merry May hours,
Over the meadow-land covered with flowers.

In a green nook,
By a bright brook,
Where the fringe blossoms delighted to look
Out from their bowers of delicate green ;
On their fair images shrined in its sheen ;
Together we chatted, and love was our theme,
Over the meadow-land down by the stream.

Nobody knew
How my love grew,
While the lark sang to us up in the blue,
Beautiful, summery, heavens above,
Ringing with music and glowing with love,
Down in the days when our wooing begun,
Over the meadow-land under the sun.



Isolintha.

The subject of this poem was drowned in the Bristol Channel.

IF you will not ask me more
 Till the well of grief is dry,
 And my weeping days are o'er,
 I will truly tell you why
 'Tis I wander all in vain,
 With my monologue of pain,
 By the deep, sad heaving sea.
 It is always grieving me,
 For beneath its billowed breast,
 Lies my first love, last, and best,
 Isclintha !

Through the fountains of the sun,
 In a garden and a grave,
 Where the bearded sea vines run,
 And the wild sea flowers wave ;
 Where the blue sea spiders crawl
 Up the trellised coral wall,
 Lies a sleeper, wan and lone ;
 On a bier of ocean stone,
 Lies the form that loved me most,
 And the best of beauty's host,
 Isolintha !

By a phosphor spirit's torch,
 Scaly shapes, with gleaming eyes,

Sailing in her chamber porch,
 Search the cell she beautifies.
 And these people of the sea,
 Crowding round her curiously,
 Lift her tresses as they float
 To the monotonous note
 Of the surge that beats a beach
 You will never rise to reach,
 Isolintha !

Led by love, my fancy dives
 Through the palpitating sea
 To a tomb wherein she strives,
 Yes, she strives to welcome me ;
 Strives to draw her matted hand
 From its glove of golden sand,
 But the danky sea-weeds twist
 Clammy bracelets on each wrist ;
 And that sheath of yellow sand
 Is the grave of beauty's wand,
 Isolintha !

To thy prison-house afar,
 Was it love that lit me down,
 Or that briny, blood-red star,*
 Gloaming on thy temple crown ?
 Awake ! my Isolintha, dear !
 O, my soul, she does not hear.

* The star fish.

Do I dream, or am I dead,
 In this hideous, deep sea bed?
 If my soul was not thy slave,
 Should I love thee in this grave,
 Isolintha?

I have wept sad years to death,
 Since the wild, heart-rending wave
 Drank my darling's parting breath,
 And the prayer her white lips gave.
 Not a zephyr seaward goes,
 With the sweets of Devon's rose,
 But it bears a tremulous strain
 From the gusty song of pain.
 It is years, long years ago,
 Since I learnt to love thee so,
 Isolintha!

If my love was not so blind,
 Should I foster vain regret
 For the casket left behind?
 When the gem is heaven-set,
 Where the jewels of mercy bloom,
 Shall we seek it in the tomb?
 As a sea bird on the deep
 Folds its wings and falls to sleep,
 Thy sweet spirit floats above,
 On a flood of better love,
 Isolintha!

Musing by the sea, I saw
 Through my tear-beclouded eyes,
 Heaven's love in nature's law,
 And a path to Paradise :
 Saw a path by spirits trod,
 From the crucible of God.
 When the sun was drawing rain
 From the fountain of the main,
 Rose a spirit from its thrall,
 Whom her sister angels call,
 "Isolintha!"



Wooing.

“**D**ORA dear, Dora dear, come, and sit down
 with me ;
 Under the boughs of this shadowing hawthorn tree,
 Hid in this mossy nook, who can discover us ?
 'Tis like a summer cloud, shining all over us,
 Here may I tell thee my love without fear,
 Come, and sit down by me ; Dora, my dear.

Dora dear, Dora dear, be not so shy of me,
 'Tis not a kiss I am wanting to buy of thee,
 Talk not a word about little birds listening ;
 For by the light of thy merrie eyes glistening,
 They shall confess to me all that you mean,
 Come, and sit down by me, Dora, my queen.

Shook by the breath of the wind-spirits, whispering,
 It is of love that the light leaves are lisping,
 It is for love the wood pigeons are cooing so,
 Down in the dingle, and I must be wooing you,
 Wooing you, darling, my fate to decide,
 Come, and sit down by me, Dora, my pride.

Dora dear, Dora dear, when shall our wedding be?
 Say to my heart, 'neath this sweet odour-shedding tree,
 Whisper me tenderly; tell me my dutiful;
 When shall our village bells warble most beautiful
 Stories of love in the valley below?
 Name me the day I am longing to know." •

Spake the fair Dora; "'Tis much that you flatter
 me,
 Sure, 'tis your tongue is a gun in love's battery;
 So my affections must certainly fall to you,
 And my objections are nothing at all to you:"
 Colin kissed Dora, and under the tree
 Settled the day when the wedding should be.

Saint Monday.

Come on, Saint Monday; thou art not the most
 Unwelcome ghost
 Of a dead yesterday that ever came,
 In robes of flame,

From a day's sepulchre in the far west,
To rouse the toiler from his Sabbath rest.

Much may I wonder why men call thee Saint,
Yet there's a quaint
Dash of indulgence in thine aspect odd,
As if the rod
Of care was broken by some angel's hand,
When Sabbath bells were warbling o'er the land.

Morn o'er the city breaks, the stars are few
In the great blue
Wide wilderness above, and fading fast
Out to the past,
The pilgrim day is passing through the dawn;
Street lights expire, and sleepy watchmen yawn.

Sharp chanticleer to the departing stars,
Up through the bars
Of the dim cellar looks, and trumpets loud
To the fair crowd,
With a brief preface made by flapping wings,
Cries, "Allelujah! praise the King of kings."

Hark! through the city ways from slumber's camp,
How the loud tramp
Of Labour's legions, led by duty stern,
Sounds the return
From Mercy's banquet to a new week's strife,
For home, love, beauty, fortune, fame, and life!

For at the bidding of his master man,
 Loud as he can,
 The Giant Steam doth as a demon shriek,
 And myriads break
 From the soft bonds of sleep, with a strong will,
 To battle Want; they have no hope to kill.

The drowsy sluggard, like some Samson shorn,
 Turns from the morn
 His sheeted face, and for the loss of time
 Cares not a dime;
 He will at breakfast say to sulking wife,
 "I did not hear the whooter 'pon my life."

But come, Saint Monday, for I do not dread
 My cross of lead;
 'Tis not the load we bear nor the road's length,
 But the soul's strength
 Which proves the hero, and if toil's a ban
 Then 'tis the best that ever fell on man.

Eve in the City.

NOW to the toiler comes a sweet reprieve;
 The curfew bell of labour o'er the gate
 Of the great factory swings, and hope elate,
 We throng with weary hands because 'tis eve,
 Out on our homeward paths, and silence steals
 In the deserted wilderness of wheels:

And busy hands in humble homes prepare
 All that they can for the bread-winners' sake ;
 The kettle-steam is up ; new bloaters bake ;
 Afresh the floor is swept, and father's chair,
 In its accustomed place, with cushioned seat,
 Waits for a traveller in the thick thronged street.

Nor may it wait in vain, some from their toil,
 Like weary soldiers when the fight doth cease,
 Will with their mates to smoke the pipe of peace,
 To the near tavern hie, though suppers spoil,
 And watching wives are cross when husbands say
 "'Twas but one pint to help me on my way."

Now, with their torches kindled at the fount,
 The swift lamp-lighters run ; the shadows fly
 To the dim courts and lanes ; and as a sky,
 Swarming with stars 'twere past all hope to count,
 So glows the city, with the light that shines
 From the fire spirits in their crystal shrines.

The streets are noisy with a host of sounds ;
 His Evening *Echo* the news-vendor rings ;
 Fiddles are squeaking to a wight that sings ;
 Clarionets chatter, and the harpist wounds
 Music to death amid the mingling cries, [pies!"
 Of "Fine new walnuts!" "Oysters!" and "Hot

It is the hour of love in every sphere,
 And love is not a stranger to the poor ;
 Mary the servant, at her master's door,
 To hear a pleasant voice say "Well, my dear,"

Waits in her apron white with cheeks aflame,
Because she hopes to change her place and name.

And from her mirror in the sphere above,
Emblazoned beauty turns; a splendid thing,
Reared in the lap of fashion, she will sing
In the saloon below her dreams of love,
Or on the sofa lounge, then to the play,
Ride with her lover in a graceful way.

The weary children to their beds are put,
And some of them will cry their souls afar
Unto the land of dreams where fairies are
Playing bo-peep, and till their eyes are shut,
Others will lie and sing their vesper psalms,
Happy as cherubs 'neath the heavenly palms.



What Art Thou Worth?

WHAT art thou worth, lord of the castle proud,
Out of thy shroud,
To those that fear thy law, look, frown, or word,
As 'twere the sword
Of Fate suspended by one hollow hair,
Above the thread of life, sharp, bright, and bare?

What art thou worth? Shut up thy door and count
The full amount

Of all thou hast to love and leave behind
 When thou'rt a blind,
 Poor, senseless, nothing, mingled with the earth.
 What art thou now? What wilt thou then be worth?

And thou, O king, that should'st all men surpass;
 What to the mass
 Of wealth-creators art thou worth of good,
 More than the brood
 Who fawn, cringe, kneel, and lick thy royal hand
 For a luxurious living in the land?

The sun bears light, the clouds bear rain, the sod
 Bears like a god
 For man, brute, bird, and insect, every need;
 But man bears greed
 That knows no limit; Oh! my mother earth,
 What unto love are thy best children worth?



Gold.

MY heaven is not paved with gold;
 For all that hath been writ of it,
 I would not have it if I could,
 There's blood on every bit of it.

I would not harm my angel's feet
 With such a hateful use of it;

I loath, I scorn the thought unsweet,
Because of man's abuse of it.

Love weeps insulted by the thought;
Shame on the saints that sing of it;
The world is cursed because 'tis sought,
And demons love the ring of it;

Love it, because that souls unwise
Polluted with the stain of it,
That might without to Eden rise,
Run hell-ward for the gain of it.

Worms of the world, how mad you are!
What glory can you see in it?
Why bear your gold god up so far?
How strong your faith must be in it!

Tear the idea from your creed;
Let not your fancies dwell with it;
My thoughts that dare a better deed
Would pave the streets of hell with it.

Decay.

WHEN shrivelled leaves are dropping dead
From rocking trees; and home to bed
The sleepy roses haste away;
There is a spirit in the land,
It is my grief to understand;
It is Decay.

It was to hear the robins' psalm
 I wandered where the zephyr calm
 Did sob, and moan, and seem to pray,
 And there I saw what you may see—
 A spirit making signs to me ;
 It was Decay.

On mossy wall with ivy clad
 Sweet robin sang, but I was sad ;
 And yet it was a tender lay,
 Such as I love the best of all ;
 But then I heard a spirit call ;
 It was Decay.

Calling me from the fight for bread
 With man my foe, and home to bed,
 As one that loved me from my play,
 Did often in the evening hours ;
 Ah ! she is with the sleeping flowers,
 Gone to Decay.

Gone, in the way I have to go ;
 Why should my spirit answer " No ? "
 Am I not weary of the fray ?
 If that my lamp of faith be bright,
 Enough to last me through the night,
 Why fear Decay ?

Why fear ? O thou weird spirit speak,
 Hast thou not from my lady's cheek

Stolen the last red rose away?
 Till there is not a bud to cull
 Of all that once was beautiful:
 Tell me, Decay?

Dear brow, from which these gray hairs fall,
 ·Alas! it is the fun'ral pall

Of all my love implores to stay
 With me because 'tis mine; and when
 We part it will be death. What then?

 Answer Decay!

Avant! thou foul relentless hag!
 My wild love weeps to see thee drag
 This idol of my soul away
 To thy dark den and clammy couch;
 See! how it shrinks at thy vile touch.

 Avaunt! Decay!

Art thou a friend ordained to lead
 The weary to the rest they need?
 After thy night will it be day?
 Then gently, gently, lead us both
 Along the road, though love be loth.

 Welcome, Decay!



Questions.

DO the flowers know
 Pathways of escape
 From the house of death below
 The evanescent snow,
 Unto beauty, life, and shape?
 Have they hope or faith to show
 How a mighty hand unseen
 Leads them up the blades between?

Does a birdie beg
 Knowledge how to break
 From its native egg,
 When its yellow beak,
 To a world unseen before,
 Opes a little crisp white door,
 And a happy mother chuckles to the sweet
 Pretty baby chick that crieth wheet?

Knowledge more than these,
 Why should we desire?
 For what God doth please,
 With thy soul at ease,
 Wait; and to life aspire:
 So shall thy aspirations be
 Thy wings to immortality.

Dust Thou Art.

THE weather was dry ;
 The roads were brown ;
 Out of the sky
 The wind came down ;
 And under the elms that shook with dread
 Over my path,
 Along the strath,
 My mother I met, when mother was dead.

My mother ! how odd !
 Was she not put
 To sleep by God ?
 The door was shut
 Of her chamber strange, and we made her bed
 Under a mound
 Of holy ground ;
 Yet mother I met, when mother was dead !

My mother unsought
 I often meet,
 With a weird thought,
 Out in the street,
 Coming along in a shroud that trails
 Over the red
 Perishing dead
 Leaves that follow with windy wails.

Thy mother is just
 The same as mine ;
 My mother is dust,
 And so is thine,
 Whether a king, or beggar instead :
 And so, alas !
 It came to pass
 My mother I met, when mother was dead.



Unsought Pleasure.

WHERE the sorrows of the city most abound,
 I was walking with a chilly autumn day,
 Saying, "Here is not a pleasure to be found ;"
 So I gave my thoughts to misery away—
 Gave my sorrows to the people of the street—
 Gave my pity to their poverty and pain,
 Till I found a pretty pleasure at my feet,
 In a little shining shallow pool of rain.
 'Twas a picture of the heavens up above ;
 Do you say it was a very common thing ?
 I have laid it in the treasury of love ;
 I am looking at its beauty while I sing.

For while bending o'er the shallow water-pond,
 I cared not for my sorrow in the street,
 I was lifted all unhappiness beyond,
 By the thought of heaven being at my feet.

Searching for God!

WHAT is there in this world like Thee;
 Thou, great Eternal! One in Three?
 And Three in One Almighty 'kind,'
 Imperial God! must I be blind
 Till death reveals the secret? which
 Of all Thy wonders vast and rich,
 Beyond conception shall I ask
 To aid me in this ponderous task?
 Say loving Sun, whose happy beams
 Dance on the dazzling snow,
 And light us through this world of dreams
 With thy seraphic glow;
 Canst thou to me this knowledge give?
 Art thou like Him by whom we live?
 Is it that power of might immense
 Which holds the planets in suspense,
 And will to waste no atom spare?
 Is it, O Lord, of love and care;

That arch of beauty angel built,
 Above this flowery realm of guilt,
 The summer rainbow? Can it be
 That liquid monster named the sea,
 Which folds ten thousand wonders in
 Its awful compass? May we win
 The secret from Thy winds? 'tis odd
 And strange of sound that thought within
 Should say

There is no power so much like God
 As that to which the pine plumes nod
 On the tall mountain's brow; there may,
 There must be truth in this, the air
 Through which the happy sunbeam darts
 Unseen, but present everywhere,
 Is made of three distinctive parts
 Essential to one whole: the wind
 Ah! there's the key I longed to find!

What man, or brute, or creeping thing,
 Blades, bees, or trees, or birds that sing,
 In the Creator's empire grand
 Could dare its certain death withstand?
 Shorn of this mighty vast unseen
 And God-like wonder, what between
 This star from which my fancy runs
 To the blue sea of golden suns
 Is there that can arrest and strike
 The soul with truth like this? 'tis like

Him in its omnipresence more
Than all my thought beheld before ;
It is the all-sustaining breath
Of life ; without it would be death,
And if it be a likeness poor,
Still am I richer than before.
Now then my soul thou shalt not fear
The sceptic's laugh, or scornful sneer,
For when they press me in the fight,
And when they grow with boastive might,
I will to save me from despair,
Invoke three spirits of the air :
Carbo shall to my aid descend,
Hydro shall be my second friend,
Bright Oxygen, the third and best,
Shall haste to conquest with the rest,
And Truth declare that there can be,
Three all in One, and One in Three.



The Christmas Box.

HOW much shall I give for that smile you are sporting?

Come; what shall I give you, my little lady;
I know very well you are only come courting,
You cherry-cheeked rogue climbing up on my knee;
 With happy hopes feeding
 Some joy of thy needing,
And eyes that are pleading most eloquently.

Come; what will you take for the ring of your laughter?

A bow for your hair? or a tart for your tea?
I ween 'tis a kiss you are toiling up after,
So on, and be welcome to one, two, or three:
 'Twas ever the duty
 Of manhood to beauty,
Thus then I salute thee, my little lady.

What! not want a kiss? well, the next time I offer,
You may not refuse me, you shy little fox;
Pray tell me your pleasure, my beautiful scoffer,
With white fingers tangled about in my locks?
 Now why do you tarry,
 My ruby-lipped Carrie?

“I want you to give me a nice Christmas box.”

Ah! just like the world; I am waiting, and willing;
But what shall it be? I am longing to know;

Suppose that you change me this new silver shilling
 For one kiss of yours; 'neath the mistletoe bough,
 Where Cupid, for pleasure,
 Lurks shooting at leisure,
 His victims that measure love ribbon below.

Well done, my wee lady ! that settles the matter ;
 And now I will tell you a story beside ;
 But first you must promise to hush your love chatter,
 Although 'tis a pity your tongue should be tied
 Except you were trying ;
 The power of crying,
 Instead of just sighing for fancies denied.

About in the kingdom of trouble and danger,
 Abroad in the desert through which I have been,
 Where grief is the native, and joy is the stranger,
 What strange Christmas boxes there are to be seen
 In places death-blighted,
 Where life lies benighted,
 And love weeps affrighted, to see what I mean.

Such quaint fashioned boxes, prepared for enshrining
 Fair soul-worshipped jew'ls when their beauty is
 fled,
 Provided with pillows, and warm flannel lining,
 So that you might fancy 'tis just like a bed
 Prepared for a lover,
 And then you discover
 A name on the cover of somebody dead.

You knew Dolly Downing, the love poet's daughter,
 Dear Dolly; of whom that we all understood,
 How tender-armed angels to heaven up caught her,
 Away in the spring of her life's golden-hood,
 From caring, from fretting,
 And all the begetting
 Of evils besetting the pathway to good.

Well, 'twas on a time when the laurel and holly
 Were gracing our homes as you see them to-day,
 That one of these boxes for dear little Polly
 Was brought to her chamber, and in it she lay
 Cold, waxen, and chilly,
 And dreadfully stilly,
 Just like a dead lily gone down to decay.

Ah! now thou art weeping, my dear little lady,
 Because I have led thee the shadows among;
 Thy world was all sunshine, but now 'tis so shady,
 And I have been doing thee, doing thee wrong;
 Alas; 'tis thy pity,
 And more than my pity,
 That sorrow should enter thy heart with my song.



A Memory.

I WILL sing to thee, O lady of my lay!
 I will sing to thee sweet memories of mine;
 I will charm thee with a story of a day,
 When thou wert the merry maiden Madoline.

By the margin of a river in the west,
 We sat beneath a canopy of oak;
 I made thy cheek a pillow on my breast,
 And the boughs came down about us like a cloak.

'Twas a sunny summer Sunday, Madoline,
 And the honey winds that wandered up the dells
 Came upon us o'er the wavy water shine
 Of the river with a melody of bells.

And we listened to their music as we sat,
 Till a butterfly, soft yellow as a moon,
 Came and hovered o'er the roses in your hat,
 On that sunny summer Sunday afternoon.

You may mind it, gentle lady, if you try;
 You may see a pleasant picture of my love,
 In the fluttering of that yellow butterfly—
 Your pretty summer coronal above.

I saw that thou wert beautiful and good;
 I knew that humble poverty was mine;
 I forsook thee in thy merry maidenhood;
 I have saved thee from its sorrows, Madoline.

The May Queen and Her Lovers.

A Legend of St. Vincent's Rocks.

UP St. Vincent's lofty shoulder,
Mounted on a massive boulder,

In what time the grace of Flora decks the flowery
woods of Leigh,

You *may* see the spectre dreary

Of an old man, sorrow weary,

Crying "Mary, Mary, Mary," in the midnight,
crying "Mary!

I am coming home to thee."

Then the shadow riseth slowly,

From its resting place unholy,

And with silent feet it wanders by the mountain's
flowery rim;

But the raven in its eyrie

Hears a pilgrim solitary

Passing by its sanctuary, crying for the soul of Mary
In the summer starlight dim.

Tombless, as the winds of heaven,

Homeless, poor, and unforgiven, [span;

Solemnly it wanders onward to the Avon's splendid

Then the spirits of the river

Tremble with a sudden shiver,

And they murmur "Lost for ever," as the shining
waters sever

To receive the hopeless man.

'Tis a secret worth your finding,
 And a lesson worth our minding,
 What the expiator meaneth by his melancholy cry,
 In the haunts he loved of olden,
 When the world was green and golden,
 Ere his future was unfolden, ah! this truth has been
 withholden,
 'Tis the way he went to die.

In the chronicles of sorrow
 I have read the tale we borrow,
 And a little, tear-stained story, written with the
 tell-tale pen
 Of a man, whose spirit weary,
 Glideth by the raven's eyrie,
 In the midnight lone and dreary, crying "Mary,
 Mary, Mary!"
 By St. Vincent's hawthorn glen.

'Twas that time in merry England
 When the butterflies went Maying
 Through a scented sea of sunshine,
 To the carol of the skylark,
 To the jingle of the blue bells,
 To the whistle of the mavis,
 To the brown bees' psalm of labour,
 And the cooing of the wood dove,
 Sitting like a summer angel,
 On a canopy of emeralds.

Then I saw a band of damsels,
 Saw a flock of joyful beauties,
 With my merry May Queen Mary,
 Tripping on the soft green heather,
 In and out among the daisies,
 And my heart grew full of praises,
 And my soul, with tender trouble,
 Full of trouble, fond and "tender,"
 As a river's mossy cradle
 Where the virgin waters bubble,
 Full of passion, loved and loving ;
 As a blossom-bannered orchard
 In the gentle reign of April,
 When the baby buds are peeping
 From their cloisters in the fruit trees.

Fondly from the dance I won her—
 Won my darling May Queen, Mary—
 When her fairy feet grew weary,
 And we rambled from the dancers
 O'er the glorious downs of Clifton,
 On the flower-bespangled carpet,
 To a temple of the Graces
 In the groves of love and beauty,
 Near the violet-broidered border
 Of Saint Vincent's lofty kingdom.

Then we nestled down together,
 And I told my love to Mary—

To my trembling, trusting Mary ;
 And my little, loving May Queen,
 Till she fed my love with kisses,
 Purer than the pearly dewdrops,
 Shining out from golden goblets
 In the heart of Flora's palace
 And our sacred mountain altar.

In what time our guardian angels
 Wandered up through heaven's gateway,
 Laden with the blessed record
 Of our blissful spirit bridal,
 Up toward our Eldorado
 Came my mad love rival, stalking ;
 As the lithe fur-footed tiger,
 As the demon of the jungle,
 Came my mad love rival creeping
 Up toward our sinless Eden.

In and out among the hawthorns,
 Wheeling upward from the valley,
 As a falcon to a dove's nest,
 Came my wild half-brother, Walter.
 And his cruel eyes were blazing
 With a fearful lust for murder,
 As he halted by a boulder,
 By a tilted, bedless boulder,
 Listening to a fiend that whispered
 "Take revenge and hurl it on them ;

Fool, or coward, hurl it on them!"
 Then the mass came crushing on us,
 Right across our narrow pathway,
 And it smote my golden idol—
 Smote my gentle, trusting Mary,
 And my little, loving May Queen,
 Lifeless—in the vale below me.

When I felt my life was blasted
 With this horror everlasting,
 Up the cliff I sprang toward him,
 Gifted with a strength Satanic;
 But he fled before my vengeance
 As a stag before the hunter.

In the cavern of the giants—
 In the Giants' Cave I found him—
 Found the murderer of Mary.
 Face to face I met and fought him,
 There we wrestled in the darkness,
 And we fought the fight of devils,
 For my madness never left me,
 And his fury knew no dying,
 Till I wiped my bloody fingers
 On the sweat-damp hair of Walter;
 Then I left him to corruption.

Floating down the flossy Avon
 Came a full-winged outward bounder,

And she bore me far from England
 O'er a realm of tumbling waters
 With one terrible companion,
 For my mem'ry never left me.
 Up and down the earth I wandered,
 Sowing tears and reaping anguish.
 I have taunted Death to take me
 In the fields of England's battles,
 I have tried to drown my sorrow
 In a thousand lakes of vine blood.
 I can bear my woe no longer,
 I will rise and go to Mary—
 To my little, loving May Queen.
 She will pray to the great Spirit,
 "To the Queen of all the angels,"
 She will say "Have mercy on him."
 What? She comes! she comes! toward me;
 Oh, how kindly, kindly, kindly.
 See! she beckons! 'tis no vision
 Fading from me. Mary! Mary!
 Oh, my little, loving May Queen!
 Thee I follow! thee I follow!
 What is this between us lying?
 'Tis the cloven skull of Walter,
 And my feet are tangled, tangled,
 Tangled in the hangman's halter!
 Oh, this horror! never dying.
 I am as a sea-fish prisoned
 In a lake of poisoned water,

And my heart's a haunted ruin.
 So it was, it was a vision ;
 Yes, my heart's a haunted ruin,
 Where the only thing I cherish
 Is a hate of life that blossoms
 When I hear the laugh of children.

After forty years of penance
 I am here in hated England,
 Sitting where I sat of olden,
 When my world was green and golden.
 'Twas not love that led me hither,
 But my pitiless tormentor ;
 She is faithful as my shadow
 In this haunted grove of hawthorns,
 Where the butterflies are Maying.

She is with me ; there ! before me—
 Crouching on the silken heather,
 Playing with poor Walter's tresses ;
 Pointing to my bloody fingers ;
 I will wash them in the midnight,
 In the Avon's flossy water ;
 I will cast my withered body,
 I will fling my spirit's fortune,
 Through the ambient air of heaven,
 From the Avon's span of iron.

Here the story that we borrow
 From the chronicles of sorrow,

Cometh to its sad conclusion, and this is the reason
why,

You *may* see the spectre dreary
Of an old man sorrow weary,
Walking by the raven's eyrie, crying, "Mary, Mary,
Mary!"

'Tis the way he went to die.



Eldorado.

'TWAS on the brow of Brandon Hill,
My lassie and her lad O!
Sat side by side, as lovers will,
Beneath the hawthorn shadow,
Dreaming dreams of a world that beams
By the name of Eldorado.

Shyly his arm about her waist
Crept in the hawthorn shadow;
Four red lips met one joy to taste,
And softly to her lad O!
Quoth the maid, "How far from the world where we
are
Is the world called Eldorado?"

"Near, pretty near," sang a bird to the lass;
"Near, pretty dear," said the lad O!

“In a place named Morrow, to which we pass
 Away from the hawthorn shadow ;
 By the honeymoon’s light we shall sail in sight
 Of the realm called Eldorado.”

He made her vows on the velvety slope,
 And she made vows for the lad O !
 He planted a flower in her heart, called Hope,
 And blithe from the hawthorn shadow
 They went through a church together, in search
 Of the land named Eldorado.

Little maids came with the lassie’s grace,
 And boys grew up like the lad O !
 But the rose lieth dead on a mother’s face,
 And care is there, like a shadow
 Of evil to meet in a life made sweet
 By the search for Eldorado.

Very merry years are down with the dead,
 Grief is come to the lad O !
 The hair hangs grey from a matron’s head—
 They are near to their Eldorado ;
 ’Tis a bed underground, called Rosemary mound,
 In the “Valley of Death’s dark shadow.”



Down Home.

OH, the day is gone to rest,
 And I revel in the beams
 Of a moon in yellow drest,
 That hath brought me happy dreams
 Of a love-enchancing spot,
 And a little moonlit cot,
 Down home.

And fair spirits of my race
 Crowd about me, as I lie
 Dreaming of that happy place,
 With the yellow moon on high,
 Beaming, as it loved to beam,
 On the joys of which I dream,
 Down home.

Soft as butterflies that sit
 On the blossoms they love best,
 So my winged fancies lit
 By the moon in yellow drest,
 Nestle down upon my heart
 Till my memories depart
 Down home.

And I dream with open eyes
 Pleasant dreams I must adore,
 Of that pretty paradise,
 With a being at the door,

Calling, in a gentle way,
 To a little lad at play,
 Come home.

In the molten mellow light
 Of the yellow moon above,
 She is looking very white ;
 But her voice is full of love,
 Full of love, that seems to be
 Like an angel's call to me,
 Down home.

Home again, at love's desire,
 Merry, innocent, and glad,
 Romping by my father's fire
 With a kitten frolic mad,
 And a bonnie brother boy,
 Laughing like the soul of joy,
 Down home.

Swinging on my garden swing,
 As I swung in days of yore,
 When the trees were blossoming,
 Forty years ago or more.
 Thanks to mem'ry, strong and kind,
 For that swing I left behind,
 Down home.

Sailing with the sweetest lass
 Heaven ever made for love,

On a liquid looking-glass
 Of the summer stars above.
 Singing, as we used to sing,
 When the hills were echoing,
 Down home.

With her, from my care afar,
 Walking in the witching light
 Of a primrose-coloured star
 That hath lit my dreams to-night ;
 Happy, beautiful, and good,
 In our glorious goldenhood,
 Down home.

Leaning o'er the bridge at eve,
 Listening to the charm that wells
 O'er a scene I wept to leave,
 From a band of dancing bells ;
 Silvery bells that sang to me
 Up a sacred orchestra,
 Down home.

Ah! the spell is breaking fast,
 But the bells are tinkling still,
 Faintly in that happy past,
 And my spirit in their thrill
 Trembles out, in blissful tears,
 For the dear departed years,
 Down home.

There's a coffin cloud above,
 With a silver-broidered pall,
 And the yellow moon I love
 Lies within its massy thrall ;
 So the joys whereof I sing
 Are all visions vanishing,
 Down home.



The Bells.

MERRILY, cheerily, hark ! how sweet
 Old England's bells are pealing !
 Whilst the swift globe,
 In her green robe,
 Among the stars is wheeling ;
 And as we race
 The realms of space,
 They blend love-peals of laughter,
 As if they fain
 Would banish pain
 To death for ever after.
 Come, gentle zephyr, whisper low,
 And tell me, for I long to know,
 Where do the sweet bell spirits go
 That wander from our tower ?

Peacefully, pleasantly, hark! those bells
 Proclaiming love's evangel!

 Flow dulcet stream
 Of notes that seem
 Sung by my soul's good angel.
 Blow, gentle breeze,
 Bearing heart's ease,
 For spirits upward climbing
 To heaven's rest,
 Are cheered and blest,
 When Sabbath bells are chiming.
 Many a soul, long steeped in crime,
 Bends softened by their holy chime,
 For mem'ries of a better time,
 Float from the old church tower.



The White Sleeper.

I STOOD in the night
 Bending over the bed
 Of a sleeper so white
 That I fancied her dead ;
 For lilies that sleep
 On the water-nymph's breast,
 When honey winds creep
 Out of groves in the West,

To fan the faint flowers
 Up from a sweet swoon,
 Nor birds in their bowers,
 Beneath the May moon,
 Ever slept such a sleep as my love in her bed—
 That I leant above saying, "Alas, she is dead."
 Not the golden-eyed stars,
 Nor their yellow-robed queen,
 Peeping in 'twixt the bars
 Of our crystal-like screen,
 Ever halted their cars
 To behold such a scene,
 Except when they sight
 Radamanthus, that steers
 His course in the night
 From the fountains of tears,
 That gush to betoken
 Love's saddest farewell,
 When Psyche has broken
 The bonds of her cell:
 'Tis then that they brighten
 Their torches of gold,
 Lest darkness should frighten
 Shorn lambs of the fold,
 That tremble and tighten
 On Jesus their hold,
 When flying from trouble
 Unto that blest shore
 Where pure pleasures double
 And pain is no more.

These were the sweet words
 Of a song by desire,
 Hope sang to the chords
 Of her peace-making lyre ;
 And so love delighting
 Kept singing, till fear
 My spirit affrighting,
 Spake thus of my dear :

“The lark from its flight
 O'er the green meadow's breast,
 Cometh down with delight
 To its daisy-fringed nest ;
 But her soul shall not come
 From the land of its dreams
 To this rose without bloom,
 And this star without beams,
 Where pleasure is greatest,
 And purest and best,
 Where love is the sweetest
 That ever was blest ;
 Her sweet soul is ranging
 Away from thine own,
 With bliss ever changing,
 By mercy bestown ;
 And thus while it tarries
 With angels above,
 Thy mother earth carries
 The corse of thy love.

Look! man, void of valour,
 Look down on that bed!
 The fair sleeper's pallor
 Is that of the dead!
 Her cheeks shall not redden,
 Her eyes never shine;
 Those white hands, so leaden,
 Shall never clasp thine,
 Nor own thy caresses:
 Haste, man, while you may,
 Snatch one of her tresses
 From Death, and away;
 So few are the blisses
 Humanity sips,
 Thy warm passion kisses
 Lie dead on her lips.
 Come! come! from that altar
 Spill not the sweet wine,
 Let true Love exalt her
 In Memory's shrine."

Thus Fear, the inventor of horror, too wild,
 Became my tormentor, but Hope, Heaven's child,
 That watched the pearl wicket, detected a breath
 Coming through the pearl thicket to say 'twas not
 death;
 Soft eyelids are lifted, sweet pinky lips part,
 And sorrow is drifted away from my heart.

The Broken Ring.

TOO loud thy lips have spoken
 Prophetic words of woe;
 Our bridal ring is broken,
 And we are breaking too:
 This is our parting token,
 Alas! what shall we do?

Come back, false Hope, that flattered
 My loving soul to sing,
 Before our darlings chattered
 The songs of life's young spring;
 And thou swift Time that shattered
 This dear old bridal ring.

Give me this hand, sweet weeper,
 You gave me with your vow,
 When love made thee my keeper,
 And beauty crowned thy brow;
 Thus with affection deeper
 Than then, I clasp it now.

Oh! pilgrim day departing,
 Can thy successor bring
 Balm for my spirit smarting,
 Or chase the fears that sting
 My frightened thoughts upstarting
 O'er this time-shattered ring?

Sketches of Twelve.

WHEN Janus leaps
 Up from the bed
 Of his poor dead
 Mother, that sleeps
 Out in eternity; and the winds freeze
 Waters to ice,
 Is it not nice
 Over the river to travel at ease,
 Swift as a sprite, by the skeleton trees?

When his days ebb
 Out to the past,
 And in at last
 Snowy-faced Feb.
 Comes, is it not very pleasant to sit,
 Warm as a mouse,
 Home in your house,
 Near as you please, where the fire lies lit,
 Working, or reading, or learning to knit?

When it is March,
 Tossing brown dust
 From the earth's crust,
 To the world's arch,
 Over the tree tops, and sunbeams are strong,
 Is it not fun
 To see the run

Of the white snow from the hills with a song,
Down to the valley lands laughing along ?

When April sweet
Comes with her showers,
And happy flowers
Under your feet
Break from the house of death, and the birds sing,
Who can be sad ?
You should be glad,
As the brown bees that are out on the wing,
Over the meads where the cowslip bells ring.

When it is May
Is it not good,
Out in the wood,
From cities away,
With some one you love to sit down on the stump
Of an old tree,
Looking to see,
And guessing how far the red squirrels can jump,
Over the beech trees that grow in a clump ?

When o'er the globe
June to our isle
Comes with a smile,
In a green robe
Spangled with roses—white, yellow, and red—
And by the wall
Ripe cherries fall

Down in her lap by the strawberry bed,
Is not this world like a heaven you tread?

And when July
Sunbeams are shot
Fiercely and hot
From the blue sky,
So that fair flowers fall faint on the lea,
And of the pond
Cattle grow fond,
As you are fond of a shadowing tree,
Is it not beautiful down by the sea?

When with her scythe,
Over our earth,
Mocking dumb dearth,
August the blythe,
Laughs like a god! with delight doing good,
And there are sweet
Cakes of new wheat,
Made for the hearty brown harvester's food—
Is it not merciful? is it not good?

But when for sport
September's in,
Is it not sin
Of a sad sort
To be out with your dog and your murderous gun,
And, without shame,
Sneaking for game,

Along by the hedges where partridges run ;
The deed is ignoble, and better to shun.

October appears—

Leaves to decay,

Hasten away ;

Clouds are in tears

For the dead that lie thick in the lanes, and we seem

Breathing the breath

Of them in death,

While musing amid them ; till fondly we dream

Of a spring that should gladden our souls with its
beam.

November gloom

Falls from above ;

Now let me love

My little room ;

If I look out to the skies overhead,

I see a stark,

Dirty, half dark,

Vapour-full wilderness, and I must tread

Mud in the streets, with umbrella aspread.

Brief the days die,

Long is the night,

Making its flight,

Under the sky,

When with December the year is of age,

To be no more,
 Now as of yore,
 Holly-crowned Christmas and Pleasure his page,
 Happy as ever are crossing the stage.



England, Neutral.

LET England watch her water gates
 By headland, cape, and bay ;
 While rivals fight
 For wrong, or right,
 Let her sons watch and pray.
 Back from the brawl ;
 Ah ! one and all,
 Peace is our guest to-day ;
 But watch ye well her water doors,
 Prepare for come what may.

Oh, skipper! standing at the helm
 Of freedom's barque, what cheer?
 The war blast howls,
 The tempest growls,
 The storm will be severe ;
 God keep thy heart
 By honour's chart,

And teach thee how to steer,
 With gentle force,
 A noble course
 From the dire danger near!

I mind a hymn I sang of yore,
 And thus it used to go—
 “Let dogs delight
 To bark and bite,
 For God hath made them so.”
 It is to me
 A mystery,
 That God the deed should do;
 Are kings to sway,
 Made in that way?
 Is it their nature, too?

Kings fight; I wrong them, they are grown
 Wise in these latter days;
 Our modern kings
 Are sacred things,
 More than they were always.
 The hours have been
 When kings were seen
 Armed; at their armies' heads,
 Leading the charge
 Like fiends at large;
 But, now, they die in beds.

So let them die, till wars are boons,
 With all my throbbing heart
 I pray; and sing,
 God save that king
 Who plays a kingly part!
 But he who plans
 That worst of bans,
 War, with its blasting strife,
 Doth quit his throne
 To turn the stone,
 While Murder grinds her knife.



*The Beautiful Watcher.**

—
 A TRUE STORY.
 —

“WEAVE me a song, my father,”
 Spake my darling with a sigh,
 And I saw the tear-clouds gather
 Like dew in a violet’s eye;

* My son being a schoolmate of the Hero’s brother, came home laden with a little lock of the Beautiful Watcher’s hair, and entreated that I should (to use his own language) make some verses in memory of the tragical occurrence. The heroism of Archibald Walters must be the admiration of all. The whole calendar of immortals on the muster roll of Fame does not present another such. Why are the Lords of song silent? I have listened in vain, and regret that I have not paid sweeter tribute to the noble Spirit.

The tragic event related in these lines occurred on October the 23rd, 1874,

Like dew pearls shrined in the tender
 Girth of a violet's cup,
 Trembled a tear,
 In the eyes of my dear,
 When the sigh of his soul came up.

“Of what shall I sing, my beauty?
 Come, give me a theme to weave,
 To please thee is surely my duty,
 With what do you come to grieve?”
 I looked in the face of my darling,
 And watched for the sound of his breath,
 As a maid for a kiss,
 But alas! it was this;
 “It is all about death, ‘about death.’”

His cheek on my shoulder reposes,
 I start at his earnest request,
 As bees from the bosoms of roses,
 Sad sighs wander up from his breast.
 I knew they were stealing the sweetness
 Of life from the soul of my child,
 And leaving their sting,
 In a blossom of spring,
 But I said, as I mournfully smiled,

“What, love, wilt thou pay me for singing,
 If I should obey thy command?
 And what art thou tenderly bringing
 To me in thy lily white hand?”

"I bring thee O father, a treasure,
 I want to be kept like a vow,
 It is one golden lock,
 From a death-smitten flock,
 And a curl from brave Archibald's brow."

I look in the face of my glory,
 I gather my strength for the strife,
 And bid him relate the grand story
 Of heroic Archibald's life.
 The tears from his eyes trembled over,
 His cheeks are all snowy and wan,
 His loving lips part
 With a sob from his heart,
 And thus to my heart he began.

Saying, This is the way it was, father,
 That he came to be turned into clay,
 It was nearly the last of October,
 Because 'twas the twenty-third day.
 When he said to his mother, "Come, kiss me,"
 And just like a chick from a coop,
 Sped away for the fun to be caught in a run
 On the road at the back of a hoop.
 Away from the city he wandered,
 As if 'twere appointed by fate,
 And a strange little boy that he met in his joy
 Came with him to be his playmate.

I wish you would mind to remember,
 His age was but six when he gave
 His life up so free to the lad only three,
 That he perished in trying to save.

Away they went further and further,
 Till the little strange boy said, "I know
 If we just go up here, there's a place pretty near,
 Where such bouncing big blackberries grow."
 So in the lone lane, without thinking,
 What sorrow might follow their joy,
 For the love of the sweet bramble berries,
 He went with the strange little boy.
 Until all at once, when the darkness
 Fell down on the world like a blind
 From the beautiful windows of heaven,
 Their homes were a trouble to find.
 All round by the tall tangled hedges,
 They went, till 'twas growing quite late,
 And the shadows came crowding about them,
 To keep them away from the gate—

Came down from the clouds of October,
 Around them like curtains of crape;
 And they listened with hearts beating wildly,
 To voices of things without shape.
 For when the weird shadows were wafted
 About by the winds to and fro,

They went with a moan, and they came with a moan;
So I wish you would tell if you know,
Was it, father, the wicked field fairies
That wanted their lives to destroy?
For I feel sore afraid, he was surely waylaid
By them, with that little strange boy.

Oh! 'twas such a night to be out in,
So bitter, so long, and so bleak,
With no home to be found, and no bed but the
ground,
And the strange little boy was so weak,
That he said, "I can't walk any longer,"
And then he crouched down on the clod,
With his burden of pain, weeping tears like the rain,
For the want of his mother, to God.
But he went off to slumber while weeping,
And beautiful Archy above
Stood keeping the watch, like an angel,
Because 'twas for nothing but love.
For it was not for gold he kept watching,
It was not for fame to be won,
Nor was it for praise that he ended his days,
In the heroic way it was done.

Ah! what was it then, my wee darling,
What means did brave Archy employ
When the night winds came howling and snarling,
Around the poor little strange boy?

He took off the clothes he was wearing,
 To cover his playmate up warm,
 He stripped to his shirt, as if daring
 The spirits of evil and harm,
 And all the long night he kept watching
 Alone by that horrible bed,
 Till the strange little boy woke to give his friends joy,
 But the Beautiful Watcher is dead.



Rain Through the Roof.

A STORY OF WET WEATHER.

IN the night,
 When the light
 Of my chamber lamp was burning
 Dim and low,
 In its glow
 As a life to God returning,
 I heard the jolly jingle of the water spirit's feet;
 Driven from the blotted heavens, they were merry
 in the street;
 They were bounding from the pavement, they were
 dancing on the roof

Of my little city cottage—and it is not waterproof ;
 For there came, my soul to flutter,
 Through a crevice in the gutter,
 To our dormitory flooring, near the bed whereon I sat,
 Drops of water, dirty brown ;
 Saying as they hastened down—
 Skit, scat, pit, pat,
 Pat-ter, scat-ter, skit-ter, scat-ter ;
 Pit, pat, scat-ter, scat ;
 The voices of the water made a melody like that !

In my shirt I sat to shiver
 As the sedges by a river ;
 Till my lady-love, awakened from her slumber by
 the sound,
 Started, screaming from her pillow,
 As a mermaid from a billow,
 Sadder than a weeping willow by a stream of water
 bound,
 Started screaming “ What’s the matter ? ”
 And the rain said—pit-ter, pat-ter,
 ’Tis the water-witches’ revel, you will certainly be
 drowned,
 Pe-ter, pat-ter, skit, scat,
 Pat-ter, pe-ter, pit, pat,
 Skit-ter, scat-ter, pe-ter, pat-ter, skit, scat, scat.

Then her courage overtook her,
 For the sudden fear that shook her

Flew before her radiant reason ; and these words
 she spake to me—

“By the orbs of love that twinkle,

’Tis a melancholy sprinkle ;

I am as a periwinkle in some cavern of the sea.”

But I answered, “Love, how silly :

’Tis a thought that makes me chilly,

You shall be my water-lily !” and she laughed
 melodiously,

Till a demon from the gutter—

I might weep the words to utter—

At my lily spat a sputter ; saying most maliciously,

At her, drat her, pe-ter, scat-ter,

Skit, scat, pit, pat,

Skit-ter, scat-ter, pit, pat, scat, scat, scat.

Up my most indignant beauty

Started to her noble duty ;

Leapt into her little slippers, and with hasty feet
 along

From the haunt of slumber starting,

As a sheeted ghost departing,

Kitchenward, went almost darting, for ’twas passion
 made her strong ;

Went, and brought to suit her wishes

Pails and kettles, pans and dishes,

Till we both were wet as fishes, with our work the
 drops among,

Then with faces kindly touching,

'Neath a broad umbrella crouching,
 Like two fairies 'neath a mushroom, to the water
 spirits' song,
 By the fire we sat and listened, most attentively and
 long,
 And I laughed to hear this changing in the sounding
 of their song—

Dip, dap, drip, drop,
 Slip, slap, slush, slop,
 Dip-per, dap-per, drip-per, drop-per,
 Slip-per, slap-per, slush-er, slop-per,
 Slip, slap, slop.

Spake my love while we were warming,
 " Well, if novelty be charming,
 We have found it to remember, *in this world of tears,*
 my man,
 Such a world I never sat in ;
 'Tis enough to drown a rat in ;
 Just run down and let the cat in ; shift that bucket,
 pail, and pan.
 I declare, this tub is brimming ;
 Sure, if sleep my eyes were dimming,
 I should dream that I was swimming
 In about it, like a swan,
 For last night I dreamt of tripping
 Through a storm of something slipping
 From the heavens, just like dripping
 From a goose ; and thus it ran—

Slip, slap, skit, scat,
 Drip, drop, pit, pat,
 Slip-per, slop-per, skit-ter, scat-ter,
 Drip-per, drap-per, pit-ter, pat-ter,
 Fit, fat-ter, fit, fat,

And my spirit in its vision heard a melody like that ;"
 Spake my little dripping dreamer as beside the fire
 we sat.



The Orphan's City, Ashley Hill, Bristol.

—

STRAIGHT as the tall poplar's shadow,
 Lying on the bright green meadow,
 Westward, from my chamber window,
 On a flowery mantled hill,
 Stands a city, that was neither
 Built by kings or Commons either ;
 But the soul of one believer,
 Working out the Master's will,
 Was the builder of that city
 On the "flowery mantled" hill.

It has neither spires nor towers,
 It is peopled with strange flowers,
 Brought from Sorrow's saddest bowers,
 Snatched from poverty and sin

By the graces of the city,
 Faith, Hope, Charity, and Pity,
 But 'tis Love's twin-sister Pity,
 Bears the drooping blossoms in ;
 From the saddest haunts of sorrow
 Bears the tender blossoms in.

Tenderlings, with tear-worn faces ;
 Wany waifs from desert places,
 Wanting what the grave embraces,
 Wanting father's knees to climb ;
 Wanting mother's hands to press them,
 Mother's gentle voice to bless them,
 Wanting angels to caress them,
 From the labyrinths of crime ;
 And a mighty love to teach them
 How to "make their lives sublime."

So a spirit mercy-gifted,
 Out of Heaven's bosom drifted,
 As the odours that are lifted
 When the winds and roses part.
 And it raised the flowerets pining,
 Till God saw their graces shining,
 And their fond affections twining
 Round their benefactor's heart ;
 In the city of the orphans,
 Round a new-found father's heart.

Tell me, O ye carping, clever,
 Philosophic scoffers, whether
 That your goddess Reason ever
 Has by love or duty led
 You, in all the world's history,
 Thus to build its crown of glory ;
 Answer, sophist sage and hoary,
 From your souls by faith unfed,
 When did Science, *in this manner*,
 Give two thousand orphans bread.

To the sceptic walking creedless,
 As a pilgrim staff and reedless,
 Through the valley, heaven heedless,
 I will say and sing it still,
 'Tis a city that was neither
 Built by kings or Commons either ;
 But the soul of one believer,
 Working out the Master's will,
 Was the builder of that city,
 Up the "flowery mantled hill.



Under a Cloud.

THERE are a thousand mysteries in life,
 And this is one of them : That youth should be
 Lifted from evil and the battle strife,
 While age, full ripe for death as some old tree,
 Outlives a hundred storms that rent apart
 And cleft the branches from their parent's heart.

I cannot help what course my fancies take,
 Since that dread day wherein my boy fell down
 So dead asleep that he no more may wake
 Till God shall raise him from "the silent town,"
 And Mercy lead him from his mouldy bed—
 I only know my thoughts are with the dead.

My stricken soul is as a bird that haunts
 Some sacred cypress, when the storm severe
 Blows on its rocking boughs, and darkness plants
 Her banner o'er my world, in which I hear
 No welcome voice, nought but my hope's farewell,
 The wail of women, and a tolling bell.

Under this cloud I smite a painful lyre,
 Because it was a cruel death to die,
 Crushed* by the iron steed whose heart is fire.
 No warning voice, no token, no good-bye,

* At Swindon Station, April 16th, 1872.

To the green world above his dreamless bed,
 Only one groan, and then my boy fell dead.

I wandered over the violeted heath,

Seeking faint solace where spring glories sprung,
 The plaintive wail came from a bramble wreath,

Of a sad mavis mourning for its young ;
 I did not dream till then that there could be
 One waif in life so far from joy as me.

Save one that did the dreadful news impart,

Whose painful pen hath made us sadly wise,
 Unhappy Mary of the tender heart,

And a pale mother with wild haggard eyes,
 Weeping warm tears because she knew 'twas vain,
 To weep for her dead child beyond all pain.

Sweet is the sympathy of things that grieve,

I cannot tell you why a fancy odd
 Should sing to cheer me, but I do believe

That minstrel bird was sent by nature's God
 To chant in our Gethsemane of pain
 A dirge of sorrow for our darling slain.

I know a world through which I came too fast,

A love-lumed Queendom, glorious, green, and
 grand ;

But now it is a graveyard called the past,

Wherein the wrecks of hope's high castles stand,
 All tumbling to decay, and ruined halls
 With memories ivy-bound on their gray walls.

I would go down unto that realm once more,
 But that my present is a dungeon dark,
 Wherein I grope but may not find the door,
 So that my soul is as a captive lark,
 Shot down with broken wings from heaven's gate,
 Waiting for balm that may be brought too late.

Time is not now to me what time hath been ;
 I know my hope is dead, but I exist
 In a care-conquered state, two worlds between,
 And all my future lies enthralled in mist.
 What shall I do that I may win heart's ease,
 Except this storm doth beat me to my knees ?

Break out, O light ! let this black cloud be rent,
 That I may search the diamonded skies,
 To find the pathway from this mangled tent
 Of a free spirit hid by tearful eyes,
 For I am as a frightened child whose scream
 Leaps in the midnight from a ghastly dream.

One blessed ray from a pale, trembling star,
 Creeps softly down, pure as the balmy glow
 Of chastened sheen from heaven's gate ajar,
 Tell me, sweet Mercy, for I long to know,
 Is it to light me from sad sorrow's cave,
 Or wake a daisy on poor Willie's grave ?

Hymen's Acid.

MY love is cross, and so am I;
 I can't be happy, though I try;
 I long to bid the world good-bye,
 But cannot part with Polly;
 Grief hangs her banner on my face;
 My household gods are out of grace;
 And home is such a dreary place;
 'Tis all through loving Polly.

How shall I break this icy wall
 That holds my idol in its thrall?
 I must not let my manhood fall,
 Nor bend my pride to Polly.
 And yet, my heart, I dare not scorn
 The sighs that 'scape her lips forlorn,
 How shall I kiss away the thorn
 That pains the heart of Polly?

I cannot work; I cannot rest,
 With this sweet sorrow in my breast;
 I almost hate what I love best;
 'Tis just the same with Polly.
 I wish my love was frank and free,
 As the old love that came to me
 When Cupid shot my spirit free
 From the blue eyes of Polly.

Before I climb my chamber stairs,
 I want to bear the cross she bears ;
 I cannot pray my evening prayers,

 Except I pray for Polly.

For if I pray, how shall I plead ?

Alas ! in this dear hour of need,

A blessed thing it were indeed,

 If all was well with Polly.

I will defy my heart's desire ;

I will not to my bed retire ;

Here will I wait afront the fire,

 To hear the call of Polly.

While that she lies in bed alone,

I will not let her hear me groan ;

I will be dumb as marble stone,

 And try to conquer Polly.

How shall I end this trouble sore ?

'Twas twelve o'clock, but now 'tis four ;

It was my fault, a little more

 Than 'twas the fault of Polly.

But how shall I this silence break,

When she should be the first to speak ?

I cannot for forgiveness seek,

 Except I bend to Polly.

When time for rest was drawing near,

She used to say, " Come on, my dear ; "

Yet she is gone, and I am here ;
 'Twas very wrong of Polly.
 My joys are all a blighted crop,
 My care a hag that comes to stop,
 My life is one great acid drop ;
 'Tis all through loving Polly.

Ah ! sweet and sour together mixed ;
 I almost wish my fate was fixed ;
 I am such pain and bliss betwixt ;
 Shall I go up to Polly ?
 Come on, cold feet, her touch may thrill ;
 Love wins the fight, against my will,
 The road to heaven is uphill,
 'Tis just the same to Polly.

The Funeral.

I REMEMBER it was winter,
 And that icy-fingered printer
 Left his hideous impressions on the faces of the poor,
 That we met while sadly strolling
 Through the city, to the tolling
 Of the Sabbath bells, extolling Heaven's love and
 Mercy's store
 But I heeded not their wooing,
 For I knew that I was going

To be parted, and for ever, from a friend beloved of
yore ;

Parted by a woe devastating,

O'er my life dark shadows casting,

And a grief that will be lasting, till my pilgrimage
is o'er.

Sadly, with a load I carried,

In the city street I tarried—

Tarried wan and terror-stricken by a flock of ghastly
things,

Beetle black and cavern-chested,

Raven-plumed and sable-crested,

That about his dwelling rested, with their heavy
velvet wings

Drooping dustward, in the manner

Of a breeze-forsaken banner ;

Ah, I know what they come after in a world where
pleasure stings ;

So my heart was terror-stricken,

As the autumn leaves that sicken

When their fellows fall to quicken with the life of
future springs.

Then the voice of anguish stifled,

In a temple pleasure-rifled,

Bursting from its sanctuary, smote a swift respond-
ing string,

In my bosom comfort craving.

But I listened to the raving,

To the wild unholy raving of a strange imagining,
 Till my reason sank affrighted,
 And my sadder spirit sighted
 Through her misty turret windows what awoke my
 fear to sing :
 Then a taloned Trouble tore me
 On the sin-damned orb that bore me
 As the cortège came before me of the sin-begotten
 King.

Clouds of crape, with fearful faces
 Peering from their black embraces,
 Melancholy monsters rolling o'er my heart that bled
 in vain ;
 And Despair beside me stalking,
 Demon of the funeral talking
 To my spirit, westward walking with the sable-
 crested train,
 Saying, "Thou shalt never meet him,
 But his mother Earth shall eat him,"
 Till I called the Demon liar, but he answered thus
 again :
 "What is man that God should mind him,
 When the door is closed behind him,
 Can thy Hope or Love unbind him—ever break his
 icy chain?"

Then my Hope fell faint and cheerless,
 Till a seraph bold and fearless

Told me how a little acorn fell beneath the sudden
stroke

Of a ruthless blast that tore it

From a parent's arms that bore it,

When an angel waiting for it hid it in a dusty cloak ;

Whence it blossomed, green and glorious,

As a soul o'er death victorious :

Then the coffin of the acorn was the cradle of the oak.

So the mighty Father taketh

Tender care of all He maketh,

From the meanest mite He waketh, to a spirit in its
yoke.



To the World.

THERE is a wrong beneath the sun,

A wrong of fellow men,

With which I dare in battle run

That weapon called a pen ;

My pen indeed a puny thing,

Yet if my aim I miss,

Still for the Right I hold the ring,

And charge the world like this :

You cheer the man that wins the prize ;

You laud and call him great ;

But he that fails in what he tries

Ye trample 'neath your feet :

The man that fails to hit his mark,
 Although his aim was high,
 Ye hurry to oblivion dark :
 In mercy tell me why ?

No matter what our spheres may be,
 If there's a goal to find,
 One runs the race triumphantly,
 The thousands lag behind :
 The course may be the same in length,
 But some Dame Fortune starts,
 And there are some with little strength,
 That carry broken hearts.

To him that does not want your cheers
 A thousand cheers you give,
 On him that fails you pile your sneers,
 Until 'tis pain to live.
 Why are ye guilty of such deeds ?
 I scorn your cruel plan :
 Why don't you help the thing that needs,
 And cheer the proper man ?



The Old Pauper's Song.

OH, joy is a tide that ebbs and flows,
 Whether or whence God only knows !
 The poor man's cross is a pain to bear,
 But the crown of glory is the yoke of care.
 I have seen happiness far from wealth,
 And misery eating a rich man's health ;
 I have worshipped a rose whose roots ran down
 Through the roof of a grave in the silent town.
 There's many a cheek, where bright smiles glow,
 That do not spring from the heart I trow.
 Oh, Joy is a tide that ebbs and flows,
 Whither or whence God only knows !

Oh, man is little and God is great !
 Summer lies dead beneath my feet ;
 The rose is withered, the lark is dumb,
 The swallows are flown from the wrath to come ;
 Spring will wake and summer will smile,
 But what of the poor that starve the while ?
 The spirit of love has sent them food,
 But the evil of man is mixed with good.
 Self holds the sieve while angels pour,
 And what cares Self for the hungry poor ?
 Do the winds for the leaves beneath my feet ?
 Oh, man is little and God is great !

The swallows were wise, but the robin is bold,
 Look up, little souls that long for gold,

He is flinging me down a splendid proof
 Of the Father's care from my cottage roof ;
 Except you feel you never can see
 What that love carol is worth to me ;
 But you may reckon, of course you can,
 What you are worth to your fellow man ;
 How do you gather ? and what do you give ?
 'Twill be harder to die than it is to live.
 Ah me ! that robin has made me bold—
 Look up, little souls that starve for gold.

Oh, bride of my heart, come hither to me,
 For I have a song to sing to thee :
 The year of our life is in its wane,
 And our pathway home is a thorny lane.
 We have laughed together when our hearts were light ;
 We have wept together in care's black night ;
 We've fought for each other in the days that are past ;
 We have lived for each other, let us love to the last.
 We may meet Death in a pauper's ward,
 But if Heaven is near 'twill not be hard ;
 I ask no Heaven that holds not thee—
 Bride of my soul, come thither with me.



A Book.

MY lady's face is as a book
 Whereon I love with love to look,
 Because I read the golden lore
 Of Truth and Faith upon it blent,
 Such as I never read before,
 That happy hour when it was sent
 To make my life magnificent.

An open book it is to me,
 Revealing half my destiny,
 And for my care a pleasant charm;
 My dearest thoughts it doth entrance;
 It is to save my soul from harm,
 A shrine from whence her virtues glance
 With more than mortal elegance.

A joy it is much joy above,
 To read it by the lamps of love,
 That in thought's palace windows shine
 Ah! that to me is joy indeed;
 But there's a pleasure more divine
 My lady will to me concede;
 It is to kiss the book I read.



Sonnets on Chatterton's Church, Bristol.

WHAT hast thou seen, O pilgrim! in the valley?
 What hast thou found from this great world
 of ours,

Rising more glorious or majestically

That this tall temple, made of sculptor flowers,

By Art triumphant, and her high born ally,

Seraphic Genius? 'Tis a palace vast,

On which I gaze with beauty-loving eyes,

Because I know 'twas raised in ages past,

For the great Queen of Hope's pure Paradise,

Soul-saving Love. The swift-winged angel light,
 That leaps from Heaven's window, lustre shedding,

Hath not descended from her native skies,

Or glanced from glory on a grander wedding,

Of airy elegance with massy might.

It is not like a temple made by men ;

A man within its compass barely seems

More than a miner mole that makes its den

In a tall mountain's foot. The grandest dreams

Of painter poets flash from shining sheets

Of saint emblazoned crystal. Beauty greets

You in this hall of Death. When that the door

Doth shut you in another world you tread,

Where arborescent monsters from the floor,

Shoot to the ribbed roof, whereon they spread

Their ravelled branches till that roof appears
 The haunt of spirits watching o'er the dead
 That slumber in a sepulchre of years,
 Wherein we muse by its famed founder's bed.

As a full moon, in the blue heavens dancing
 Among the stars with harmony sublime,
 Soars from her silver couch with smiles enchancing,
 Shall this fair fabric from the grasp of time
 Rise with replenished splendour to the chime
 Of holy bells; and melodies entrancing,
 Shall float above this vale of tears and crime,
 Up unto God like the glad gushing rhyme
 Of bards who see the golden age advancing,
 When Sharon's Rose shall bloom in every clime
 Beneath the blessing sun; then angels glancing
 From their high home shall bless this altar prime,
 As man is blest when mercy doth depart
 Out from the soul of God, in heaven's heart.

In these dear days this earth shall not be damned
 By a dire dearth of love. Love shall with joy
 Open her palace doors that now be slammed,
 Defying entrance to the "marv'lous boy."
 He in the cold outside stands carved in stone
 Like some unshriven soul. He sang for bread,
 And, starving, died. We to his ghost instead
 Bequeath the granite that shall not atone
 For our forefathers' shame. What deed were worse
 Than this exclusion from his dearest fane,

These are the days when juries round a corse
 Of him that dares seek Death say 'twas insane.
 What then of Chatterton? forgive his sin,
 Open the temple doors, and let him in.



How Mary Died.



I COULD not tell you, if I were to try,
 How that it was our darling Mary died;
 Sometimes I fancy that she did not die,
 But that she faded as the stars that glide
 Out softly from the darkness, to be lost
 In the full blaze of a grand summer day—
 Yes that was how her sweet soul sailed away.
 I cannot tell the pain our parting cost,
 Nor name the value, which is known to God,
 Of all the shining pearls that trembling Love
 Dropt from her palace windows, when the rod
 Of sorrow smote our hearts, but high above
 This night wherein my stricken spirit pines
 I look for Mary where the day blaze shines.



Resignation.

THE Hand that buried Moses
Has laid my babe to sleep,
Among the faded roses
His guardian angels keep ;
And so sweetly it reposes
That my love should never weep.

So kindly was it taken
From evil, that I know,
With confidence unshaken,
Whatever storm may blow,
I am not long forsaken
Where tears of sorrow flow.

I saw His angels leading
My darling from its play ;
Low on my bosom bleeding
A little while it lay ;
Then, while my love was pleading,
It smiled and went away.

Once when my soul was knitting
Past joy with present care,
A flock of dark thoughts, flitting
Like swallows through the air,
Came, and I saw Death sitting
In Baby's empty chair.

And that was all through grieving,
 Sure love will have its way!
 Fond memory, too, keeps weaving
 Fresh love knots every day.
 Still, in my sad heart heaving,
 Bold Faith shall sing and say—

“The Hand that buried Moses
 Hath laid my babe to sleep,
 Among the faded roses
 His guardian angels keep;
 And so sweetly it reposes
 That my love should never weep.”

Fame.

FAME is the tinkle of a bell,
 Suspended in a crumbling tower,
 Of a strange realm 'twixt heaven and hell,
 Where care has blighted every flower.
 He that the steep ascent would climb,
 To pull a peal must murder time;
 For all the stairs are thick with stains
 Of blood, and tears, and wasted brains.
 Fame is not worth the hunter's pains
 Until he dies, then eager friends
 Will crown his ghost to make amends.

Blighted Hopes.

“**O**VER the billows of life’s troubled main,”
 Sang a fair maid, with her eyes full of glee,
 “Christmas the merry is coming again,
 Bearing a burden of pleasure for me.”
 What did it bring her? A tear-spangled garland
 Lies on the roof of a newly-made tomb:
 May her sweet spirit above the blue star-land
 Warble love carols in melody’s home.

“Weep not, my darling,” a fond mother cried;
 “Come to my heart, and glad news I will tell:
 Home with the morning star over the tide
 Father is coming, and all will be well.”
 Why does she weep? ’Twas the cruel wind snarling,
 Up ran the breaker and down went the ship,
 Where is the hope that she offered her darling?
 Why was it dashed from humanity’s lip?

Why? ’Tis a secret that death may reveal—
 God only knows why our hopes should depart;
 There’s never a day but what cometh to steal
 A love-cherished flower away from the heart.
 Low in the dust of the paths we have travelled
 Skeletons lie of the hopes that were ours;
 And, though our sorrows with pleasures are ravelled
 Memory weeps for her fair, fallen flower.

Here in my bower of holly and bay,
 Why should I whistle to keep away Fear?
 Under the mistletoe pearly and gay,
 Why should I mourn in this happy New Year?
 Tis not that friendship or love has been slighted,
 Nor for the time that flew merry and fast;
 But I must muse on the hopes that are blighted—
 Blighted by Death in the year that is past.



A Christmas Idyl.

Crowned with holly,
 Hale and jolly,
 Even as in years away,
 See, our snow-robed friend is hither—
 Heaven only knows from whither—
 Make him welcome while you may.
 Care is vanished,
 Self is banished;
 Love is queen of the world to-day.

Bells are ringing,
 Bards are singing
 Happy songs like birds in May;
 And we all to gladness waking
 Revel in a sweet love-making;

Hearts are warmed, and fond lips say:
 Glad we see you,
 Merry be you;
 Love is queen of the world to-day.

Up and greet her,
 Out and meet her;
 By the beggar in thy way
 In thy pleasure pass not heedless;
 For the best are never needless
 Of some want for which to pray.
 Buy a blessing
 Worth possessing;
 Love is queen of the world to-day.

In the mellow
 Primrose yellow
 Softened lamp-fire's golden ray,
 Parted friends, each other greeting,
 Bless the merry Christmas meeting,
 Pleasant memories wake to play;
 All exclaiming,
 And proclaiming,
 Love is queen of the world to-day.

Out with sorrow,
 Till to-morrow;
 In with pleasure, and for aye;
 In the way you went to gain it
 Give it; so thou shalt retain it,

Pure and perfect from decay,
 To the ending
 Of life's spending ;
 Love is queen of the world to-day.

Hunger scampers
 From her hampers ;
 Know you where it goes to stay ?
 Where the widow's child lies dreaming
 Happy dreams of dainties teeming,
 And the angel's roundelay :
 Up and find her,
 Just remind her
 Love is queen of the world to-day.



Bertha.

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN WAR.

A WAKE! Awake! for freedom's sake
 The hour is come, and God shall take
 Sure vengeance on the foes of right,
 For manhood's tyrants in the fight
 That will not bend to Lincoln's star
 Shall perish by the sword they drew,
 And by the blaze of ruthless war
 Be smitten for the strife they grew ;

As autumn leaves by wind and flood
 Fall stricken, they shall fall in blood ;
 It is their choice, it is their will,
 To die in the defence of ill.

So in the North the cry, "To arms!"
 Rang thunder loud ; and eager swarms
 Leapt from the lap of Peace, to save
 The nation's life. Grey parents gave
 Their willing sons to stem the shock
 Of war begun ; forth with his flock
 The pastor from the temple came,
 For manhood's right, in freedom's name ;
 Not by desire for conquest urged,
 But for Columbia's banner purged
 From slav'ry's blot, they come to fight ;
 And for the love of human right ;
 It is their will, their mind, their mood,
 To die in the defence of good.

Peace to the land where war abode
 Again returns—the slave is free ;
 And young Columbia o'er the sea,
 Flings to the flying winds abroad,
 A thousand banners 'neath the skies
 Pure as his mother England flies.
 But there's of love a dreadful dearth ;
 Not half so kind as mother earth,
 Are all that have outlived the strife,
 For labour's right, and manhood's life.

The God that in her bosom lives
 So full her children's crime forgives,
 That where the strife hath fiercest been
 Her grasses wear their grandest green ;
 And where her warriors' graves abound
 The fairest of her jewels are found.

Beneath a fair Virginny sky,
 By a dear home to Richmond nigh,
 Reposing on the garden sward,
 In the blest hour of day's decline,
 When spirits for communion pine,
 Three sunny summers afterward,
 Thus of the war for freedom's sake,
 Face unto face two brothers spake.
 The time had been when these were foes,
 But when the strife was nigh its close
 A strange event made friends of both,
 And they to love were nothing loth.
 Why do they start? What sudden force
 Of sound hath hushed their deep discourse?

Down by the garden's farthest bound
 There was a poisoned water well ;
 And through its mouth a negro's yell
 Shot with a sudden piercing sound ;
 He was among a band that toiled
 To purge the flood of waters spoiled :
 What have they found they would not find,
 And in their terror left behind?

From the well bottom deep, and dank,
 A corpse was lifted to the bank ;
 And through a southern soldier's vest,
 A rusty dagger in his breast
 Lay driven deep ; within that sheath
 Who was it drove the blade for death ?
 When was it done ? why was the deed ?
 Was such a doom a soldier's meed ?
 What was the name he bore about
 The world before his soul went out ?
 He that would find the answers hid
 Should with my minstrel at his bid
 Come to the time of war along,
 And learn the story from his song.

Edgar, my hero, in the van
 With Lincoln's host, a noble man,
 Swift to the field must haste away,
 And well he wears a soldier's look,
 Although it is his marriage day,
 And he hath left sweet Bertha Brooke,
 Weeping beside the temple door,
 Lest he, to her, should come no more.
 For they have loved long years, and now
 The bridegroom on her virgin brow
 Hath left behind his parting kiss,
 Beside his wealth of love profound ;
 And must she live his love to miss ?
 It is a thought which frightens bliss,
 Her heart is trembling to the sound .

Of War awake, the trumpets blare ;
 The roll of drums ; the banners flare ;
 The scream of fifes, the heavy tramp
 Of legions marching to the camp ;
 In dread array, with ring of steel ;
 God ! what a horrid bridal peal.

Alas ! for such a wedding-day ;
 Led by her maids, she turns away,
 And to her rural home afar,
 Flies as a dove the demon War—
 Affrighted from his presence foul,
 And he, the idol of her soul,
 Is gone, is gone, perchance to die ;
 Ah ! now to Love and Hope good-bye,
 So sang the Fears she strove to chase,
 While tears were streaming her fair face ;
 But now her home in sight appears,
 And she must wipe away her tears ;
 In Ravenhall there is a room
 Where she will wait to know her doom.

A wealthy merchant was her sire,
 But he was with her mother dead,
 And she had seen long years expire
 Since they went home with death to bed.
 Her guardian was a kinsman kind,
 A man of wealth and taste refined,
 Who loved her for his sister floun,
 As if the child were all his own.

Thus from sweet youth to maiden prime
 Ran with her life the stream of time ;
 Alas ! that care should stir the stream,
 Or fate dispel her young heart's dream.
 The old man died, and she was left
 Of all her earthly kin bereft ;
 Then, sorrow taught, poor Bertha prayed
 The mighty Father God for aid.
 That aid how needful ! There was one
 Who strove to win what Edgar won ;
 But more than love her wealth he sought,
 And when she firmly answered, No,
 Thy passion is not worth my thought,
 He said, Beware ! I am thy foe,
 If man save me shall call thee wife,
 I am his curse and thine through life.

Was it because his vow he kept
 Fair Bertha bent her brow and wept ?
 She drops a letter from her hand,
 The words are not from Edgar's pen ;
 It doth her instant flight command ;
 His foe, Red Ralph, is in the glen,
 A troop of rebel horse he leads,
 And dares to do the worst of deeds ;
 'Tis said the Union ranks he fled,
 Because a comrade's blood he shed ;
 That deep he played, and deeply drank,
 Till deep in vice and debt, he sank ;

That in a haunt where gamblers meet,
 To win a stake he strove to cheat,
 Then words arose, and swords were drawn,
 To sheathe again, until 'twas dawn ;
 But ere the dawn, the sentry found
 A soldier's corpse, with a wide wound,
 Stretched on the pavement damp and red,
 And Ralph a traitor vanishèd.

A raid to-night on Ravenhall
 The rebels ride ; and to their ire,
 Enwrapt in flames the house shall fall ;
 But in the hours before the fire
 Begins to burn, my rival's dove
 Shall fly afar on wings of love ;
 Ah ! well ; 'tis well ; for he will know
 Whose hand it was that smote the blow.
 I told her he to death was nigh,
 In Richmond ; thence to prove the lie
 Fate speed the fool. Where stays my slave
 That bore the letter ? Curse the knave ;
 He should be here this time before ;
 By God I'll lash his back to gore :
 If he comes not I count the cost
 Will be five hundred dollars lost ;
 His mother was against her will
 More than my slave ; if I do spill
 His Creole blood it will be mine,
 And slaves are slaves by right divine ;

Thus as he rode for ruin's sake
His thoughts the reckless raider spake.

Home from the field with brief respite
My hero rides in haste ; for he
Had read the story of that night,
When Ralph the raider savagely
Laughed like a demon in the glare
Of fire-fiends dancing in the air,
That flung their banners red and wide
Over the shrine from whence his bride
Sped on the fretful feet of fear
To seek her lord ; yet he is here,
With feature white as marble stone,
Between the roofless walls alone.

Alive or dead ; where, whence, and how
Shall Edgar seek his virgin bride ?
These are the thoughts that rack his brow,
As from the scene he turns aside ;
All the long days of his respite
From war he sought his soul's delight,
Till by despair his hopes were slain ;
Then to the war he rode again,
And where more fiercely raged the strife,
He taunted Death to take his life.

Was he protected by a charm,
Or by a guardian angel's arm ?

'Twas strange that he should scathless come
 From the jaws of death, at the roll of the drum ;
 And with the living be counted one,
 A unit left of thousands gone ;
 Gone where ? Ah ! "there's the rub," we must
 Ask God, and not our mother dust.
 Few were his words, his thoughts were more ;
 Never a smile the warrior wore,
 Where beams of mirth were wont to play,
 As sun-gleams dance on flowers of May ;
 Despair had set his seal instead,
 His heart was as a tomb of lead,
 Wherein his dearest hopes lay hid
 From Love, till mem'ry raised the lid,
 And then sad Love would weep in vain,
 Until the lid was closed again.

Of all the night the blackest hour
 Is not the worst, for from its gloom
 Fair rosy morn breaks out in flower,
 And light, from darkness, leaps abloom ;
 So angel-lifted from the heart
 Shall sorrow's deepest shades depart ;
 Thus in an hour by heaven sent
 A comrade came to Edgar's tent,
 And as when friends each other meet,
 After some salutations sweet
 Were interchanged for friendship's sake,
 'Twas thus the brother warrior spake.

Edgar, my friend, I heard you say
 You want a help; along my way
 Toward your tent I found your need,
 A splendid fellow you'll concede,
 A slave he was, but has forsook
 His bonds, as fish escape the hook,
 Pray let me introduce him—look.

A swarthy lad, who wore a fair
 Soft shining cap of raven hair
 In curls above his shapely brow,
 Made his appearance and his bow;
 His eyes were rolling orbs of light,
 His lips lay open as a bell,
 Exhibiting twin rows of white
 Teeth like the chips of cockleshell,
 A nose his brow and chin betwixt
 Was Ham's and Japhet's intermixt;
 The features of his face were kind
 And a true index of his mind;
 That mind oppress'd with wrong and grief,
 Such is the stranger's sketch in brief.

Strange are the ways of God, or fate,
 Which will you say? in all but name
 Are not these myths our minds create—
 Chance, Fate, and Providence, the same?
 The Great Unknown to Edgar's tent
 Hath led the man the raider sent,

Laden with falsehood long before,
 To Ravenhall; 'twas he that bore
 Ralph's letter to the virgin bride,
 And he hath slipped his bonds beside;
 Now, from his lips shall Edgar know
 Whose was the hand that gave the blow.

What man of all the Southern host
 Armed for oppression rank and rife
 Is he my hero loveth most,
 And fears to injure in the strife?
 Alas! for Love; it is the brave
 Son of his mother in the grave.
 One moment of a dreadful day
 Brought Claude and Edgar in the fray
 Face unto face; and then they saw
 In a brief glance with kindred awe
 Each other's ire; but love forbade,
 And turned aside each brother's blade
 On other foes, too quickly found,
 Among the madder mass around;
 But when the fight was "lost, and won,"
 A summer moon in the blue field
 Of heaven, like a silver shield,
 Above my wounded hero shone.

Alas! alas! for Bertha Brooke,
 How can my wounded hero look?
 He frets within a prison foul,

Where starving braves of death are glad,
Because that they are hunger mad ;

And armed sentries on them scowl :
How now can Claude for Edgar care
While keepers steal their captive's fare ?

His brother's doom he does not know
Till days are dead ; then to his farm
He brings to nurse a bandaged arm,

Broke by a hostile bullet's blow ;
More than his love expects to win
What will he find that home within ?

Beneath his roof, in mortal guise,
The sweetest soul love ever sent,
To make the world magnificent,
Grasped by the hand of fever lies ;
And when the fury shook her frame,
He heard his brother Edgar's name,
Wild as a troubled sea-bird's screech,
Break through the burning gates of speech.
And while they watched her bed beside,
To see the fever flame subside,
The story of her woe severe
His gentle Lady told ; and ere
One half the tender task was done
His brother's foe became his own,
And with a sigh, he spake, alas !
That falsehood foul should come to pass.

Why should he now his wrath conceal ?
 At once for love and beauty's sake,
 He will the road to Richmond take,
 Nor wait at home his wound to heal ;
 Where Bertha sought her love in vain
 Before the time, he will again.
 It is 'the rival chieftains' plan
 To change their captives, man for man.
 And then ! and then ! the thought was sweet,
 He will his brother's care entreat ;
 If that his chief should grant the boon
 The bride shall see her husband soon.
 Zenobia and his lady fair
 Will for his new-found sister care
 Till his return, with Edgar free
 From prison bonds ; but who is she
 That by his lady bends above
 The virgin bride with looks of love ?

Zenobia was in years before
 The slave of Ralph, and something more
 By him, against her will, she bore
 A son, that broke from slav'ry's thrall
 When he was sent to Ravenhall,
 She for her hate of Ralph was sold
 Unto a better master's gold,
 When half the beauty of her frame
 Was wrecked to lust that knew no shame,

And still she wore the grace and mien
 That should adorn proud Æthop's queen ;
 But in her eyes bright passion shone
 Because her thoughts were of her son :
 Ah ! when will time that vengeance give
 For which she seems alone to live ?

The day is past, the hour is late,
 Through Claude the planter's mansion gate
 That unto them is open wide,
 A band of armèd horsemen ride.
 To them his absence shall not be
 A bar to hospitality ;
 For she that in his absence rules
 Is one of nature's rarest jewels ;
 A woman true, as minted gold,
 She will her lord's good name uphold ;
 Whether the war be wrong or right
 'Tis with the South her kinsmen fight,
 But there is one among the train
 That will not mount his steed again.

The feast is spread, the lamps are lit,
 The guests around the table sit ;
 And laden with the wine that cheers
 Zenobia in their 'midst appears.

Why does she in her duty start
 As if an arrow from the bow
 Of Death was planted in her heart ?

Perchance the raider Ralph may know ;

For when his eyes and hers were paired
 Two evil spirits sat and stared
 Upon each other; and the glance
 Of hatred from her countenance,
 Flashed as a flame of hell upon
 The sensual sire of her lost son.
 It was a look that seemed to blast
 His lusty soul, that shrank aghast;
 Despite the answering look he gave
 To her, no more his splendid slave.

It is a glorious night; the moon,
 Out of the jewelled heaven, pours
 A flood of glory through the doors
 That open from the fair saloon
 To the verandah; there the beams
 Of laughing light, in radiant streams,
 Rain, as a shower of silver spears,
 On a gay group of banqueteers,
 But who is he that deeply drinks
 Until the goddess Reason sinks
 Drowned in the cup
 He lifteth up,
 And his wild tongue begins to wag
 Of battle, thunder, trumpets, guns,
 And Glory, that infamous hag,
 The bride of Havock, Wisdom shuns?
 Ah who is he whose bluster grew
 Till his affronted friends withdrew

Soul-sickened with his language foul?
 'Tis Ralph, the champion of the bowl.
 There let him bask in Cynthia's fire
 He will not rise at their desire;
 For when expressed 'twas he that said
 I am not of the night afraid;
 Ralph does not trust to God his life;
 This trusty dagger in the strife
 Shall be my friend if friend I need,
 And I am ready for the deed:
 What wonder then if in disgust
 They leave the boaster to his trust?

Bring me the life-blood of the vine,
 And let me fill my veins with wine,
 He cries, and lo! at his commands
 Zenobia in his presence stands.
 Not with that look she wore when first
 She came with cheer to quench their thirst;
 Her voice is tender-toned and sad,
 Because her thoughts are of the lad,
 And if her words confess her hate,
 How can she hope to learn his fate—
 That hate which in her bosom gnaws,
 Lies hidden as a tiger's claws
 Are, till the furry-footed beast
 Tears with delight its bloody feast.

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The lights that o'er the banquet shone
 Within their crystal shrines expire ;
 The guests are from the table gone,
 It is the Wizard Sleep's desire.

And quietly, with a snow-white face,
 Beautiful Bertha on her bed
 Lies fever left in Sleep's embrace,
 The image of an angel dead.

To tend her wants her sister kind
 Hovers the prostrate form above ;
 Long hath she left her guest behind
 To do the gentle deeds of love.

'Tis well for them they do not know
 Poor Bertha's foe is of the band ;
 'Tis better for the knave below
 That noble Claude is not at hand.

Too well hath proud Zenobia hid
 All knowledge of his presence foul ;
 She stands before him at the bid
 Of love that thrills her hapless soul.

It is her darling son she seeks,
 She does not know of his escape ;
 It is a mother's love that speaks
 Unto the brute in human shape.

In language meek the proud quadron
 Her question garbs; "Ah!" he replies,
 "If from my lips I grant the boon,
 I ask a joy from thine likewise."

The meaning of his words she caught,
 And this befitting answer gave;
 "Once all my love was thine for naught,
 For I to thee was more than slave.

What boon from me dost thou desire?
 Hast thou not robbed my life of joy?
 How dare thy lips to mine aspire?
 In mercy tell me of my boy.

Can I forget that night of old
 When from his arms about me bound
 You tore me for my price in gold?
 Or lick the hand that gave the wound?

It was my blood, my bones, my flesh,
 And I was thine while thou hast need;
 Thy answer tears the wound afresh:
 I hate thee for the damnèd deed."

The demon Lust his eyes within,
 Sat staring on her beauty, till
 He caught her hands, his aim to win,
 And spake these words to gain his will:

“Come, pretty devil, let me lie
 My head on thy soft lap a spell;
 Thou shalt from me with kisses buy
 The tidings it is mine to sell.”

She tore her body from his grasp,
 She could not bide the demon's stare,
 She left her raiment in his clasp,
 She fled before him as a hare.

Her hut was by the garden bound,
 Her flight was down the garden path,
 He runs behind her as a hound
 Runs for its prey with savage wrath.

Haste! haste! Zenobia; haste ahead,
 His hand a gleaming blade contains,
 And thou hast more than death to dread
 If all the race the villain gains.

Aside to where a well mouth gapes
 She turns her troubled life to save,
 O'erleaps the danger and escapes;
 He follows, falls, and finds a grave.

It was a well before these hours
 From whence the household never drank,
 And only for the garden flowers
 Its flood was lifted to the bank.

His comrades in the dusky hours
 Of morn arose with wonder smote,
 The well-mouth with its lip of flowers
 Betrayed no sign of him they sought.

In vain they call, in vain they look,
 From Claude the dead no answer came,
 A soldier wrote upon a book,
 In the deserter's list his name.

The secret of that fearful night
 It was Zenobia's choice to hide,
 And on her life it lay a blight,
 As if her tongue by Fear was tied.

Whence came that dagger in his breast?
 He fell upon it in his fall,
 His was the clutch that held it best,
 And drave it through his bosom wall.

A flock of dreams to Bertha's couch
 Came the next morn on spirit wings,
 Fair Fancy with her magic touch
 Awoke the maid's imaginings,

And to her in the arms of sleep
 They brought bright chains of pearls that are
 Made of the tears pure virgins weep,
 When those they love go forth to war.

They hung the chains her neck around,
They sang, "Fair lady, weep no more,
All these were by the angels found
Aside the holy temple door."

And when the shining chains were hung
About the maid, they smote the chords
Of tinkling lutes, and softly sung
The tender tones of parting words.

The angel Hope in Bertha's heart
Lay listening to their roundelay,
The watchers saw her pink lips part,
And lo! a smile came out to play.

About her cheeks so white and wan,
As winter snow lies on the moor,
A pretty smile of rapture ran
From the pearl-pillared palace door.

The bridegroom, by his brother led,
Came his dear lady love to see,
And then the happy vision fled
Into a sweet reality.

So gentle love made haste to raise
The fire of life on Bertha's frame;
Her eyes were kindled by its blaze,
And through her cheeks the roses came.

Spring Joys.

A GAIN we have the spring days ;
 Glad poets sing lays ;
 Over earth the white clouds sail summerward along.
 Again the winter snows leave ;
 Lovingly the boughs weave
 Bowers for the birds that sing the leaves among.

Cheerily the blue bells
 Ring where the dew dwells ;
 Merrily the bees come, blithe banqueters :
 Honey they may drink till
 Daisy folds her pink frill,
 And at heaven's eastern gate the angel Eve appears.

Hark ! while the lark sings
 Swift on his dark wings,
 O'er the laughing brook's face swarthy swallows
 shoot.

Hush ! for the dove seems
 Telling us love dreams ;
 Violets are smiling at the forest monarch's foot.

The squirrel, in its glee, crops
 Food on the tree tops ;
 Beetles flash the blades amid, butterflies above
 Caress that pretty slim rose,
 The moon-yellow primrose !
 Because they love its beauty, and their duty is to love.

Sweet Philomel will sing soon
 Songs to the spring moon ;
 With her lamp the fireworm will catch the hedge
 aglow :

She will light the fleet hare
 To sup on dewy sweet fare ;
 And May will hang her white robe on the hawthorn
 bough.

Who will then my queen be,
 Crowned 'neath the green tree,
 Bessie bright or Eveline, of sweet seventeen ?
 Joy to my true love,
 Life, hope, and new love ;
 Better than my old love I have never seen.

I fade, and she fades,
 E'en as a tree fades
 When the dead leaves drop and wet winds sigh.
 I know, and she knows,
 Sure as the tree grows,
 We shall have a life spring in the by-and-by.

O! blessed are the spring days,
 When poets sing lays ;
 Beautiful the world grows, the fields are angel-trod :
 My soul with music gifted,
 Breathes as a blossom lifted
 Up from its mouldy chamber, by the awful hand of
 God.

To Cupid.

A BRIDAL COMPLIMENT.

WHAT hast thou been doing, Cupid,
 Since that fatal day of yore,
 When I fell like some quadruped
 By thine arrow smitten stupid,
 And fair Fanny called me stupid
 By the shining River Tor ?

I have been a restless rover,
 All the rolling round world over.
 I have been among the people
 Of all kingdoms, old and young ;
 I have danced in every steeple,
 Where a bridal bell was swung.
 I have shot from beauty's windows,
 Russians, Prussians, Swedes, and Fins,
 Spanish Dons, and tawny Hindoos,
 Romans, Greeks, and Mandarins.
 In the shrines of elegances,
 And the damnèd dens of dearth,
 I have shot my mystic lances,
 I shall conquer all the earth :
 But the chief of all my battles
 And the best I ever won,
 Was to lay my silken shackles
 On the Bard of Devon's Son.

Happy Bob.

A ROBIN, on a leafless tree,
 The tryant winter scorning,
 Stood singing bold and merrily
 One dark November morning ;
 Cold, keen, and rude, loud, fierce, and chill,
 The wintry winds were blowing,
 But sweet from happy Bob, and still,
 This stream of song came flowing,
 By heaven's grace
 My fate I face,
 And sing to sweeten sorrow,
 Though winds may blow
 My shroud of snow
 Out of the cloud to-morrow.

My soul within my breast was stirred
 To hear the pretty preacher ;
 And gratefully I own that bird
 Became my spirit teacher.
 And thus I said, till death I meet
 I ever shall remember,
 My Robin and that carol sweet
 He sang in dark November.
 For I may face
 By heaven's grace,

The cloud of grief I sob in ;
 And not be less,
 When troubles press,
 Than my heroic Robin.



The Meeting of the Emperors.

WHEN shall we
 Who are three
 Of the mighty great and vain,
 Link our gory hands again ?
 Much our meeting is a wonder
 To the friends of peace that ponder,
 Lest that we of battle fonder,
 Should their dearest hopes disdain.

Soon enough the world shall know
 What we speak in whispers low,
 As the words of thieves that creep
 Round their victims while they sleep.

When the chains we forge shall be
 Fastened on humanity ;
 When the Russian's feet are placed
 On the Ottoman disgraced ;

When that Prussian Eagles glance
 Death to war-exhausted France ;
 When that Poland's hopes expire
 In the house of Hapsburg's fire,
 And the plans we meet to plot
 Are all stamped with steel and shot,
 Then shall we
 Mighty three
 Meet again, or shall we not?



Where is Heaven ?

—

TELL me prophet, priest, or king,
 Tell me seers or sages,
 Where is Heaven ? that I may sing,
 To the lives of ages ;
 Picture poems of that home
 Where true pleasures centre,
 And that realm beyond the tomb
 Death can never enter.

Let us learn to think of this
 Ere we carp or cavil,
 There is one sure path to bliss
 That we all may travel ;

To the soul that truly strives,
 Ways and means are ample ;
 Those that beautify their lives
 Set the best example.

Sure I am, if self were less
 In our mortal leaven,
 This fair world the few possess
 Might be made like heaven ;
 Sure am I if love was bound
 In each soul's endeavour,
 Heaven sought might here be found,
 Beautiful for ever.



Weary of Life.

WEARY of life? Do you know what you are?
 Is it little or nothing to stand
 Alive on the crest of this beautiful star?
 Would you fling a bright jewel out of hand,
 To please a mad whim,
 That maketh it dim,
 Are you what you might be in the land?

Weary of life? Is it nothing to ride
 Through splendour-full regions of space,

With planets that swim in the cerulean tide,
 And God taking care of our race?
 For nothing at all,
 Ere you hide in a pall—
 Have you done what you might if you tried?

Weary of life? Is thy mission fulfilled,
 Hast thou finished thy share of its toil?
 Shall thy epitaph be: "Here a craven lies killed?"
 Would you creep to a cave in the soil,
 And hide as a worm,
 From a pass-away storm?
 Is there naught to be won from the moil?

Weary of life? Do you know you can find
 Sweet pleasure in fighting the foe?
 The angels are watching, and He is all kind
 That gave thee Love's labour to do.
 For life then to arms,
 For the battle hath charms,
 And thy soul shall ascend over woe.



My Garden.

I HAVE within this world of ours
 A little garden filled with flowers,
 Which are not as the flowers that die
 When autumn clouds invade the sky.
 To mine, because they wear a charm,
 The winter winds shall bring no harm ;
 They shall not with the spring-gems fade,
 Nor perish in the summer flame.
 In heat or cold, in light or shade,
 My garden strange is still the same ;
 For all the flowers within it found
 Were born to bloom the whole year round.

Fair is my garden to behold,
 With borders trimmed, and portals neat,
 Whereon the name is writ in gold ;
 And all the flowers within are sweet—
 So sweet to me because I know
 It was my love that bade them blow ;
 And some of them came out with pain
 So often in the midnight hours,
 That my warm tears did sadly rain
 Upon them ; but the sweetest flowers
 Of all that I have raised for love
 Are those that I have wept above.

If in the night alone you sit,
 Looking the tender leaves among,

There you may see my fancies flit,
 And you may hear that mystic song
 I heard the passion spirits sing
 When that my flowers were opening ;
 And if thy thoughts to their embrace
 Thou dost consign, then shalt thou say,
 This garden is a haunted place.

Fear not, but let thy fancies play
 With mine, good friend ; small is thy need,
 My garden is the book you read.



The Dying Hangman.

LOW on his bed, but not to rest,
 In fight with death he lay ;
 Of all mankind the most unblest
 That ever strove to pray
 To God, or fate,
 At Mercy's gate—
 It was his judgment day.

What shapes are these that haunt his room
 To fill his soul with dread ?
 They are a spectre band for whom
 Judge Conscience sent ahead,
 And conjured back
 To plague and rack
 Him on his dying bed.

Their throats are bound with strangling bands,
 With bursting eyes they stare ;
 He knows their blood is on his hands,
 With which he beats the air
 In a mad strife
 For further life—
 It is his curse to bear.

With ghastly grins his bed about
 They crowd in savage glee ;
 They cry unto his soul, Come out,
 And thou our king shalt be ;
 It was for gold
 Your soul was sold—
 You murder for your fee.



Mother to Baby.

WHENCE comest thou ?
 With this bright brow,
 Shading blue beady eyes, beaming with love,
 Gift of God's sending me,
 Loan of His lending me,
 Joy of my cottage, my dear baby dove.

Sad is my thought,
 More than it ought,
 As to my bosom I press thee with fear :
 Wilt thou grow beautiful,

Gentle and dutiful,
Up through the years of thy girlhood, my dear?

What will this fair
Soft little pair
Of pretty white hands have to do for their bread,
When I am void of breath,
Down in the house of death :
Who will be kind to them when I am dead?

Who will these feet
Hasten to meet
If in thy bosom love kindles her fire?
Will thy soul purity
Grace thy maturity?
Unto what sphere will thy spirit aspire?

Why stayest thou,
Innocent now,
Here to be tempted and tainted with sin ;
Kiss me and roam away
To thy high home away,
Pilgrim, begone, ere thy sorrows begin.

Nay, my love, nay ;
God let thee stay ;
Darkness would follow the loss of thy smile ;
Light with thy loving eyes
This wreck of Paradise ;
Win thine own heaven and bless me the while.

The Red May.

When that the lanes grow shady,
 When that the winds blow sweet,
And violets bloom for my lady,
 Up at the wood-king's feet.
Come to the land where the dead lay,
 Drowned in the autumn strife,
When the powers of death made headway
 Over the flowers of life ;
There while the fresh spring roses
 Break into bloom, you may see,
And stand like the prophet Moses,
 In front of a burning tree.

Out on the land where the dead lay,
 Buried in grime and mire,
A spirit of life to the red May,
 Came with a torch of fire.
First with a pink pale wan light,
 Then with a flush of flame,
As blood through the cheek of a man-mite
 Burns, so the spring fire came.
And if to the feast of roses,
 You come with the bronzy bee,
You may stand like the prophet Moses,
 In front of a burning tree.

Over the land where the dead lay,
 Up through its roots in the sod,

Sped, on the boughs of the red May,
 Flame from the torch of God!
 And when the sun fire dwindled
 Down in the urn of days,
 By the lamp of faith fresh kindled,
 I stood with a thought that says,
 "When spring birds sing to the roses,
 And blue-bells ring for the bee,
 You may stand like the prophet Moses,
 In front of a burning tree."

Out on the land where the dead lay,
 Kept by the care divine,
 A bird in the heart of the red May,
 Sang to a spirit in mine,
 Songs of a wonder olden,
 Seen by the eyes of youth,
 In a nook of the volume golden,
 And a shrine of holy truth.
 Thus when the fresh spring roses
 Break from their winter urns,
 I stand like the prophet Moses,
 In front of a bush that burns.

Going to Bed.

NOW is it time for rest; 'tis the desire
 Of Sleep, our gentle comforter, and I
 Have seen another pilgrim day expire;
 I wonder when 'twill be my turn to die,

And which of all the pilgrim days ahead
Will leave me dead.

It is a thought which chants me fun'ral airs,
While from my fading fire I turn away ;
I hear it as I climb my chamber stairs,
Saying stern words about a coming day,
That will to God go down in its death bed,
Leaving me dead.

Then stranger forms will climb this path to take
The measure of my corpse, a ghastly thing ;
And when they lift me up I shall not wake
Out of my sleep profound, nor when they bring
A coffin to my room I shall not dread,
In sleep so dead.

Have I not trusted the Great God of life
Ten thousand nights and more ? Has he not sent
Sleep to refresh me from my daily strife,
And morn to wake me when the night was spent ;
Cannot I trust Him when by sickness led
To my death bed ?

Dead ! what is death ? All things are prone to change
That are or will be ; the great blazing sun,
This green-robed world, and these grand orbs that
range
The wilderness of space, all these shall run
Into the arms of death, nay, change instead
Of being dead.

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